CAMBRIDGE FREE THOUGHTS

AND

LETTERS ON BIBLIOLATRY;

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF G. E. LESSING,

BY

H. H. BERNARD, Ph. Dr.

AUTHOR OF THE "CREED AND ETHICS OF THE JEWS EXHIBITED IN SELECTIONS FROM THE YAD HACHAZAKAH OF MAIMONIDES."

"הַמְּנַחֵל THE GUIDE OF THE HEBREW STUDENT."

AND THE "מֵי מְנוּחוֹת" A PRACTICAL GRAMMAR OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, &C., &C.

Stat nominis umbra.

EDITED BY

ISAAC BERNARD,

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We have it from authority that Dr. Bernard never wrote one word of this work. It was, in fact, published after his death by Rev. George Skinner, of Cambridge, had the permission of a relative of Dr. Bernard, to use Dr. B's name.

Offspar Hamel [Ralph Thomas].

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

On my return to England, after a long absence in the Indian and China Seas, my first object was to rescue, if possible, from oblivion, for a short space at least, the name of my learned Father. Cambridge has done him indeed abundant honour as to his Hebraistic and Pædagogic accomplishments. But of his views upon far more important matters—to which Philology is but the handmaid—Cambridge knows next to nothing. My Father shrunk "from the strife of tongues." Mother Church (much as we respect that "time-honoured" Lady) has not always "that excellent thing in woman, a voice soft, gentle, and low." But the Church is not an unprotected Female. She is built on a rock, not lightly "carried about with every wind of doctrine," namely, her VESTED INTERESTS.

She will therefore permit a filial tribute to a Father's memory, made, like the sacrifice of the ancient Persians, *after sunset.*

"*Nihil ultra mihi cum Luthero,*" said Charles V. when the Spanish soldiery wished to scatter the bones of the Great Reformer.

LASS DIE TODTEN RUHEN!

ISAAC BERNARD.

4, Camden Place, Cambridge,
23 *June*, 1862.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

He hated to excess,
With an unquiet and intolerant scorn,
The hollow puppets of a hollow age.

Bibliolatry,—what a word! Why disturb our minds by letters of a German, when we have "Essays and Reviews," in abundance, for those, who like such reading. I will explain by two samples.

I.—In re-Deuteronomy *v.* Exodus, or Sunday *v.* Sabbath.

The first step from the worship of the *letter* to the sound and truthful *Bible-Spirit* worship, should be to take down, from the walls of our cathedrals, parish churches and college chapels, and erase, from our Communion Service and Catechism, the XXth chapter of Exodus.

Hold! Gentlemen of the society for the suppression of vice,—stop your messenger, and hear me. I would humbly suggest to convocation, or rather to parliament, as a more constitutional, and

a somewhat more rational assembly, if they value truth, and would gain the hearts of the people, to substitute, in place thereof, that other form of the Decalogue, written in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy,—"written" alike, gentlemen, "with the "finger of God,"—which finger points no more to *Sabbatarianism*, a lesson which addressed the Child; but to *humanity*, which is to be our lesson, till time shall be no more.

Our Reformers, great and good men, had not time for every thing; their vocation was not Biblical scholarship, but to be burnt, and thus light a candle, of whose light, we, their descendants, have not yet sufficiently availed ourselves. Others have laboured, and we have not yet entered into their labours. And the Sabbath, the poor man's grievance,—"a yoke "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear;"*—may be a specimen of the sort of rational reformation to be petitioned for, at the hands of our rulers. Let us compare then Exodus with Deuteronomy, placing them side by side.†

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* See the recorded vote of censure, by the Scotch clergy, on parties who had saved a shipwrecked vessel *on Sabbath!*—v. Buckle's Hist. of Civ. vol. 2.

† But I must explain myself. We have a work written by a master of a college, wherein he commends Deuteronomy, as more spiritual than Exodus; because the former says: "thou shalt not *desire* thy neighbour's "wife"; and the latter, only: "thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbour's "wife." Now here the Hebrew word being, in the original, precisely the same (תַּחְמֹד), this same learned Theban, should have reserved his criticism, for an exercise in his own college chapel. This is not exactly the method we adopt.

Exodus, Ch. xx., v. 11.	Deuteronomy, Ch. v., v. 14, 15.
For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and *rested* the seventh day: *wherefore* the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.	*That thy man servant and thy maid servant may rest as well as thou.* And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; *therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.*

Two distinct reasons being here asserted for keeping the Sabbath, which, we ask, ought to be constantly held up to the eyes of our people? Exodus is the stronghold of the ancient and modern Pharisee. I appeal, from the present conventional preference of Exodus, to our Lord himself,—to his precept and to his example; "The Sabbath was "made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." "My Father *worketh hitherto*, and I work."*

Here he putteth away the first reason, that he may establish the better.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I "understood as a child, I thought as a child: but

* "Thou thoughtest me such as thyself." Our notion of heaven is often the reflection of our earth upon its clouds.

So of the attributes of heaven.

To the over-tasked slave, in sultry Egypt, *rest* appeared supreme felicity; and "God *rested* from his work."

To the lively, free Greek, in his lovely climate, energy and full developement of mind and limb was bliss. Hence Aristotle's idea of the Supreme bliss was *energy;* Jesus sanctioned the Greek rather than the Hebrew view: "my Father worketh hitherto."

"when I became a man, I put away childish things." Already in the days of Deuteronomy the sun was peeping above the mountains, to scatter the early morning mists. In the eye of reason, God resteth not, neither slumbereth, nor sleepeth; out of his own mouth is the Sabbatarian condemned. Like Shylock he would turn to the bond, and lo! the finger of God writeth therein; "more precious in "his eyes, than the letter of the bond, is one drop "of the poor man's blood." "Dear shall their blood "be in his sight."

How will the poor man bless the legislator's boon, who rescinds Pharisaical, Judicial restrictions on the Sunday—"Touch not, taste not, handle "not,"—who will thus turn the Sabbath into the genuine Sunday, a day of hope, and promise, and activity; not like the stagnant pool, but as the living, running waters, sparkling in the sun, and fertilizing the earth; gladdening, as well as purifying, the thoughts and feelings of the heart. To seek for Sunday in the Jewish Sabbath, is to seek the living among the dead. Already in Deuteronomy, the *myth* yields to *reason;* the bond slave, with his wife and his children, in every age and clime, is the primary object of God's tenderness in the enactment. The law was to lead to the "adoption of "children,"—"the service of perfect freedom."

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the "servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I "have called you friends; for all things that I have

"heard of my Father I have made known unto "you." The twilight should lead us on, unto the perfect day. To go back to the monks, or the Pharisees, is to prefer darkness to light. "The "law is good" only "if a man use it lawfully."

Compulsory abridgement of the poor man's innocent enjoyments is directly opposed to the *spirit* of the Bible. Sunday is a day when those confined by in-door, sedentary, six-days work may change the scene, and stretch their limbs, with healthful exercise, in the fresh breeze, in the green fields, under the open sky. Crowded and prolonged assemblies vitiate the air; let him survey more God's temple, "not built with hands," the arch of heaven and its "majestical roof, fretted with golden fires." "God made the country," says Cowper, "man made "the town." Leave me alone, one day, with nature's beauty, to renovate my mind. Hear the words of one of the people, and pardon a dash of bitterness in one of a most noble nature, but who felt bereaved of his birthright, by the restraints of Sabbatarian ordinances.

"Oh the miraculous influence of beautiful woodland, and "heather and moss! They enable one to think of Whigs, Tories, "Priests and practical men, with all their jugglery, and the folly "on which they prey, without a feeling of acidity!"

C. R. Pemberton's *Remains*, p. 258.

II.—The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.

To show the absurdity of such cant phrases, we have but to analyse each part of the sentence.

The Bible. That is, an indivisible totality *must* be made of treatises, varying in languages and age, consisting of parts most heterogeneous, not to say incongruous,—the works of authors most unequal in style, in matter, in value and importance; and therefore in degree of inspiration: a self-contradictory position!

Accordingly these Bible-gentlemen already split upon the Apocrypha—is it, or is it not, to be bound up together, as part and parcel of the Bible? These absurdities may remind us of the Indian god with a hundred arms, intended as an emblem of unlimited strength, but forming only a grotesque idol. But perhaps the Bible itself contains the best similitude:

> Behold a great image, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay * * * then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, &c.

The forced union is fatal to each part, "*mole "ruit sua.*" As a whole, few books are really less read.

The whole Bible. There are parts of Leviticus, the Song of Songs,* Genesis, chap. xxxviii. and Ezekiel, chap. xxiii,† which as little merit a place

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* A beautiful love song is very well in its time and place. But "what "does the honest man do in my closet?" And then the headings of each chapter, meant to catch the precisian's eye, like Pharisaic fringe and phylactery—e.g. "*The church having a taste of Christ's love, is sick of "love,*" are revolting to common sense.

† There are other passages, which, assuredly, would not have escaped animadversion, from a Levitical society for the suppression of vice.

in a canon of books of "instruction in righteous-"ness," as Ser Ciappelletto deserved a place in the canon of saints; while the rejected Apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, as little deserves exclusion, as would St. Francis de Sales,* from the list of beatified worthies.

Nothing but the Bible. That this collection of Jewish writings,—justly called the Book of Books,—has been, and still is, of inestimable value to the human race, we admit. Though far from identical with the word of God, it may, in a qualified sense, be said to contain it. But is it to supersede all other books? It is a help, not a substitute, for reason and science. It is one of many Bibles, vouchsafed to the family of man. The most ancient legislators ever referred their laws to law yet older,—more time-honoured,—infinitely more just,—namely, to the whisper of God, in man's conscience. It was this made Aristides just, and Socrates content to die. It is that unwritten,—that living law of nature, the same yesterday, to day and for ever, and of whose fullness all branches of the human family partake, and of whose earthly origin, who can tell the beginning? "In the waves of the sea," says the Divine Wisdom, "and in all the earth, and "in every people and nation, I got a possession."†

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* That charming, but very scarce book "L'esprit du B. François de "Sales," in 6 vols. 8vo. by Bishop Camus,—a perfect Boswell,—shews that it is *possible* for a Romish saint to be both admirable as a man, and a perfect gentleman.

† εν παντι λαῳ και εθνει εκτησαμην,—*Eccl.* xxiv. 6.

"Man is heir of all the ages." God speaks to mankind, at divers times and places, in divers manners. He, who giveth corn to the Caucasian, giveth rice to the Hindoo. Various books equally ancient with the Bible, contain alike truths of natural religion, most clear, most elevated, most deep. The ancient sacred books of the Brahmins display many worthy representations of the Deity. In all ages, and in all lands, have there been privileged souls, who have soared in thought, far beyond the sphere of their contemporaries, and drawn from the same great fountain of light, and communicated that light to others, as they were able to bear it.

It was God, who spake in the Zend-Avesta,—the Korân,—by Confucius,—by Plato,—by Epictetus,—by Simplicius,—by Antoninus,—by

"The Samian, Bactrian Sage, and all, who taught the right."

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things "are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever "things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, "whatsoever things are of good report," are found, ever and anon, written in the rolls of these sages, no less by the finger of God, than was the Mosaic Decalogue, graven on the tablets of stone.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift," we are told by the Apostle, "is from above, and cometh "down from the Father of lights;" as surely therefore, by his inspiration, did Homer rhapsodize, and

"sweetest Shakespeare" preach from his pulpit, the stage, as did Jesus, in his sermon on the mount.

It is only, as the Rabbins say, the *measure* of inspiration, which differs in each particular case.

If in our Lord's case, it be "*in measure without measure*," can this be said of discordant Genealogies?

Our samples have been of unconscionable length, but we now proceed to give some account of the letters, and of their author.

PREFACE.

Introduction.

The highest privilege, and the chiefest consolation of man, consists in communion with his Maker. The purest of pleasures in life, is to attend "the auld kirk" with Father and Mother, in childlike reverence, that knows not doubt. We all of us fain would die in the same faith, wherein our fathers died.

But the age of reason succeeds to the age of innocence. What was the strength of the child may be the weakness of the man. That faith which was to be the guardian of our moral nature, may become a blind credulity, destructive of our high birthright—intellectual freedom of thought.

Hence, in days of free enquiry tending to the disruption of established creeds, it is natural that the state of man

> "Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
> "The nature of an insurrection."

There are the martyrs to reason, as well as martyrs to faith, and the sharpest trials of each probably consist, not in the outward endurance,—the dungeon, the scaffold, and the stake,—but in those inward struggles of the soul, of which the eye takes no

heed, and "a stranger intermeddleth not there-"with."

We live in such a crisis.* It is vain to conceal the fact; it is time we must awake out of sleep. We must awake to the realities of the broad day. In vain would we continue the sleep of reason. In our days, at least, the sun makes no compact with the dial, "to return ten degrees, by which "degrees it was gone down;"—in vain would we make the hand of the old church clock point again to *Mediæval.* The sun is risen upon the earth, and we must abide the toil and the heat of the day. It were vain for the mature Adam to dream of his infant paradise,—he must set to work, with his apron and his hoe.

Such is the great drama of our day,—a drama fraught with high actions and high passions, in which the writer of the following letters supported no ignoble or undistinguished part.

Lessing as a dramatist and a man of letters.

It is hard to realise the false conceptions entertained about Lessing, till a recent period. In the beginning of this century Jean Paul writes: "With "regard to other countries we must consider, that "the constellation of our new literature, having

* Meanwhile few except factious partisans will deny, that the extremes of High and Low Church are equally betraying the cause of rational and pure Religion—which is the true strength of a people.

"A plague o' both your houses!"

"risen only half a century ago, the rays of it are "still on the road thither."

This was pre-eminently so with our Islanders,

"—*Toto divisos orbe Britannos.*"

John Bull stands aloof,—is content with his own highly creditable *idiosyncracy*,—*virtute me involvo*,—defends the fogs and mists which obscure the light within, as he does (in the Play) the atmosphere without, "replete with vapours:" "The air of "England goes ten times as far,—it must, you know, for it's ten times as thick."

Johnson—that pompous vamper of common-places, often more trite than true,—that impersonation of Anglican prejudice, whose Cyclopian figure, photographed by Boswell, as a Sampson Agonistes, making onslaught on the Philistines, was so long the delight of our boyhood and our riper years,—Johnson's star was in the ascendant. "Sir, I love a good "hater." "Rousseau to the gallies,—to the hulks "with Voltaire,—German books to the bottom of "the German Ocean."

"Forgive my transports on a theme like this,
"I cannot bear a French metropolis."

Slowly through the fogs of Thames, and the mists of Edinburgh, calmly, silently rose to notice the bright star of Lessing—fairest among the "living saphirs" of German genius.

Slowly—for while enshrined in the Walhalla among the greatest of his age, embalmed in the heart of his father-land, and preserved in the library

of nations, Lessing's master-piece "Nathan" was thus criticised in an early number of the *Edinburgh Review*:

"The work before us is as genuine sour krout as ever perfumed "a feast in Westphalia."*

But the opening of the continent, peace, and steam conveyance have brought at length, that best of free trade, interchange and intercommunion of thought among the foremost spirits of the great European family, so essential to the progress of civilization and humanity.

Slowly upon us also at last the planet of Lessing "rising in clouded majesty, unveil'd her peerless "light." Twenty years later the *Edinburgh Review* writes:

"We confess, we should be entirely at a loss for the literary "creed of that man who reckoned Lessing other than a thoroughly "cultivated writer; nay, entitled to rank in this particular with the "most distinguished writers of any existing nation. As a poet, as a "critic, philosopher or controversialist, his style will be found "precisely such as we of England are accustomed to admire "most. Brief, nervous, vivid; yet quiet without glitter or anti-"thesis; idiomatic, pure without purism, transparent yet full of "character and reflex hues of meaning."†

But alas! what charms the British Critic,—as in unison with his own intolerance,—is Lessing's weakest point, his sweeping abuse of Voltaire.

"The first foreigner who had the glory of proclaiming "Shakespeare to be the greatest dramatist, the world had ever

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* *Ed. Rev.*, Ap., 1806, p. 149. The translation reviewed was the very respectable one by W. Taylor of Norwich.

† *Ed. Rev.*, Oct., 1827, p. 321.

"seen, was Gottlob (Gotthold) Ephraim Lessing * * * He "attacked Voltaire with polemical dexterity, with rare acuteness, "with invincible logic, and at once dwarfed the conventional "elegancies of the Frenchman, by placing them beside the "majestic proportions of our giant."*

After all, it was as a being of understanding and reason—not as a Poet—Lessing best understood Shakspere. In doing justice to Lessing let us also not be unjust to Voltaire. "What is true "in him, is not new," said Lessing. Yes, but Voltaire gave new life to what lay bedridden in the dormitory of men's souls. "Voltaire's humor "is mere *persiflage*," says Jean Paul. True, but *persiflage* was natural to Voltaire, and style is no more to be censured, Lessing himself has said, than a man's nose on his face. Besides it suited his age and country, and with this keen weapon alone, of ridicule, was he to discomfit the bigots, and

"Drive those holy Vandals off the stage."

Hence — *hinc illæ lacrimæ* — whatever he said or did was, and still is, of course, grossly misrepresented. "*Ecrasez l'infame*," applied by him to the Jesuit, is still repeatedly quoted as though meant for the Lord Jesus. As to Shakespere, Voltaire had no childish jealousy, like Byron. He did him all justice possible — for a Frenchman. His mind, Goethe truly observes, was not Teutonic, but the highest conceivable intellectual power, that

* *Ed. Rev.*, July, 1849, p. 61.

France and Frenchmen could produce. Why should not great men, of most varied mould, stand, side by side, in our libraries? Why

"so devote to Aristotle's ethicks
"That Ovid be an outcast quite abjur'd"?

There are moods when each gives each a double charm. "From serious Antonine," says Dr. Armstrong,* "to Rabelais' ravings." Man is heir of all the ages; the world of intellect is wide enough to embrace both, and to these two great European instructors, Shakespere and Voltaire, is mainly due the kindliness of modern philosophy.

Lessing as a Theologian.

But leaving Lessing's general merits to his able biographer Stahr,† we proceed to his character as an amateur in theology, with which we are now more immediately concerned.

According to his own testimony‡ Lessing was no Rationalist, he disliked the inconsistency of the semi-supra-semi-naturalists, from Origen down to Socinus, Locke and Bishop Thirlwall's "Schleier-"macher." It is vain after swallowing the camel, to affect being choked by the tail. If Saint Denis

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* In his "Art of preserving Health."

† G. E. Lessing, sein Leben und seine Werke von Adolf Stahr. Berlin, 1859.

‡ "I have especially defended the Orthodox Lutheran Christian "Religion against Roman Catholics, Socinians, and Neologians."

"The Reverend Gentleman has expressed his approbation by word of "mouth, and in print."

really walked with his head under his arm, "Ce "n'est que le premier pas qui coute." When once quietly installed in the Ark, "the lion," Bishop Horne judiciously observes, "would eat straw like "the ox." When the prophet Jonah sits hymning and harping in the whale's belly, it is a work of supererogation in the Rev. Thos. Hartwell Horne, in his inimitable farrago,* to lessen our wonder by quoting the naturalists, that living bodies are not digestible.

Far more logically consistent, he thought with Dr. Arnold,† were the English Deists. Them he regarded with an admiration, not unmixed with terror. Those stout English hearts reminded him of the Pilgrim Fathers, first crossing the wide Atlantic.

"Thus sung they in an English boat
"An holy and a cheerful note;
"And all the way to guide their chime,
"With falling oars they kept the time.

"What shall we do but sing His praise,
"Who led us thro' the wat'ry maze,
"Unto an isle so long unknown
"And yet far kindlier than our own.

"And *'mid these rocks* for us did frame
"A temple where to sound His name."

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* *Introduction to the Bible.*

† "Unitarianism, acknowledging the authority of Scripture, and assert-"ing its own peculiar interpretation of it, appears to me to lose in strength "intellectually exactly as much as I hope it gains by so doing morally." Dr. Arnold's Serm. 1845, p. 218.

Surely the more logically consistent we are in forming our religious opinions, the more truthful and therefore the more moral we are.

Rejecting the stronger evidence is the greatest immorality which the case can admit.

These daring men had acted in strict accordance with the counsels of the great Athenian sage;* when the more safe, more firm, and more convenient vessel, traditional revelation, appeared to them no longer sea-worthy, they had perilled their souls along the voyage of life in long-boat, or self-constructed raft, of the best and most irrefragable reasoning, which the case afforded, and thus in humble reliance in the common Father of mankind, had been wafted down the stream of Time into the Ocean of Eternity.

But was the dear old Biblical ship indeed proved by them to be thus crazy? Was not the raft too hastily constructed?

> "Bound on a voyage of awful length,
> "And dangers little known,
> "A stranger to superior strength,
> "Man vainly trusts his own."

The English deists,† as Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Tindal, Collins, Woolston, Chubb, Toland, Mandeville, and Shaftsbury, though full of genius, fire, vivacity, and life, seemed to Lessing deficient in ancient Greek, or at least Oriental Literature. The inimitable Bolingbroke indeed must be ex-

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* Plato's Phædo, p. 85, C. D.

† It is refreshing to have at last a somewhat philosophical account of these men, in the "Geschichte des Englischen Deismus von G. V. "Lechler, Stuttgart, 1841," instead of the innately vulgar works of Leland and Van Mildert, where they are strung together as heterogeneous vermin, nailed on a barn.

cepted. How it was possible for so young a man, a premier, immersed in politics, and unhappily in all the pleasures of the town, to take so masterly a *precis* of ancient Greek philosophy and Rabbinic lore, we are at a loss to conceive. His remains,—conversations with Pope and Swift,—are among the most amusing literature of England.

And, as to "the life that now is," what was the deist's hope? Lessing's good sense saw the world everywhere close the gates of mercy upon the free-speaker. The tamely obedient horse* is pampered in the stall;—the wild horse, free as the winds of the wilderness, perishes of hunger and want. He did not choose to descend into the arena in the cause of Truth, not fully ascertained,—with a *morituri te salutant*,—to exhibit himself as the dying gladiator, before a reckless and unfeeling public.

The *defenders* of the faith, indeed, both ancient and modern, he viewed with unutterable scorn, "mumbling with toothless rage," as Warburton describes Waterland's answer to Tindal. Such defences betray any cause. "It is not the mob I "fear," said an officer of the Guards during the riots, "it is the fire of the Volunteers, exposes us "to hourly danger." But there must be deep truth

* The wild tenants of the wood and mountain are designated in Hebrew as "living" beasts, (חַיַּת־הַשָּׂדֶה), from the fire and vivacity—quick breath and stir of blood—which characterise their life of attack and defence, as contrasted with the sleepy existence of the sheep and cow, (servum pecus).

in that book, thought Lessing, which outlives and outlasts such intensely ridiculous lines of defence. And so, in short, he pursued no further the paths of men of dangerous parts, and fatal learning—as deserts, whitened by the bones of many a too curious traveller,—and kept the broad track of "Mecca* "and the Caravan," — those primrose paths of dalliance which the world's favourites tread, and those soft cushioned stalls, where blockheads hear, —and sleep!

Reimarus.

From this happy slumber Lessing was aroused, as by the sound of a trumpet. His residence at Hamburg had introduced him to the family of the great Hermann Samuel Reimarus, lately dead. He was much interested in learning, from the son and daughter, various particulars of their illustrious parent. Reimarus had for many years filled the chair of professor of Oriental literature. He was a prodigy of universal learning; with piety more than enough for a convent, and with the learning of a Pearson, "the dust of whose writings," Bentley tell us, "is gold." In the reason of man, in the instincts of animals, in every realm of Nature, he

* But to avoid religious jars,
The laws are my expositors,
Which in my doubting mind create
Conformity to Church and State.
I go, pursuant to my plan,
To Mecca with the Caravan.
GREEN'S *Spleen.*

referred everything to the Immutable, and perceived the Godhead alike in all. The bright cheerfulness with which he had borne continual sickness revealed to his family that he lived above time and the world; the ever quick and open spirit, from which neither what is rarest, nor most ordinary escaped, showed with what unwearied ardour he sought for every trace of the Godhead,—with what eagerness he watched for its slightest manifestation. He inherited the philological fame of his great father-in-law, Fabricius, and Porson attests the transcendant merits of his Dion Cassius. His "Principal truths of "Natural Religion,"* was long the text book through-

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* How different is the native eloquence of one who writes from the heart, from that of the hired Tertullus of the schools,—especially when the Professional Esprit de Corps whispers to the latter, not to go too far.

"Plac'd at the door of learning, youth to guide,
"We never suffer it to stand too wide."

Amica veritas—sed magis amica Ecclesia. What would Reimarus say to a writer who received a thousand pounds to write on "the Power, "Wisdom, and Goodness of God as manifested in the Creation," who begins by proclaiming all "*utterly insufficient for the great ends of Religion,*" "which can, I well know," he says, "be achieved only by that Revealed "Religion, of which WE ARE MINISTERS,"* and so makes the very heavens to tell the glory of his own order, and the importance of the cloth? Ye Gods! the countless millions that have, and do, and are to tread this planet, are to drink no water, but through the Lambeth, Oxford, and Cambridge Water-works' Society. Was the counsel at the bar retained by Lord Bridgewater to plead for or against poor Natural Religion? It required a stalwart frame and unbashful forehead thus to disparage "Divinest Nature,"—the heavens that tell the glory of God, and the firmament that showeth his handywork. Alas! all unction,—the sweet wine and the feast of fat things must be reserved for the Christian Theological pulpit, or "Othello's occupation's gone."

But this gentleman's lukewarmness in the cause of Natural Religion, is pardonable compared with the violent attack of another defender of the Christian faith, who goes right near to promulgate Atheism under

out the Continent, on this most important of all branches of enquiry, and supplied Paley alike with plan and materials. His Job is a model comment.

But the marvel of marvels was to follow, the defender of Venice was the "Bravo of Venice." The very accomplished Elise Reimarus revealed the secret to Lessing, that her father had entrusted to her hands "An apology for the rational wor- "shippers of God." He had found reason points to Natural Religion, as surely as the magnetic needle to the north. This great work (still published but in part) had been the darling object of all his thoughts and studies, during the last thirty years of his life. And here every point of Church orthodoxy was demonstrated to be indefensible, wherever she departed from the voice of conscience, —the sanctity of reason,—the earliest teachings of the glorious heavens above, and the earth beneath,— the regular course of divine providence.

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the Oxford Protestant cowl. Here the heart is moved, but it is on the side of interest.

"Little Cupid took his stand
"Upon the widow's *jointure land.*"

To plead the uncertainties of metaphysics, in order to force the Athanasian Creed upon our consciences and reason,—to say that, without the present Church Establishment, mankind must "live without God in the world," and die without hope, like a dog in a ditch,—to scare us from defending our Christian liberties, by pointing to the dark mines and counter-mines of an uncertain controversial divinity,—what is all this but to betray the town to the enemy, and fire the citadel with our own hands in order to enhance the importance of some advanced, paltry block-house, on whose preservation forsooth depend *our vested interests and shares?*

* Astronomy, &c., Bridgewater Treatise. London, 1833, p. VI. and VII.

Is it to be called a fault, a weakness, or a virtue, that Reimarus, like Pythagoras and so many others, kept back from the many, his *esoteric* doctrine? "He scanned our nature with a brother's eye," he regarded human errors in religion with tenderness and pity. Poor children of Adam! picking up pebbles on the shores of the vast ocean of truth, why imbrue your hands in a brother's blood, or dip the pen in gall, because each esteems his own the prettiest pebble? He venerated religious prejudices, and, like the good Melancthon, would have besought his aged mother to continue her attendance at Mass,—it was her Religion.*

What nights of prayer and tears had not his investigations caused himself. Such awful subjects seemed, again and again, to demand reverend and blind submission! Only "Fools rush in where "angels fear to tread." At least it was the safe side that his discoveries should die with him. He shrunk, as Lessing says, from notoriety and coteries, from politics, and noisy adherents of a popular heresy. He detested factious tongues, and the

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* This has since been carried too far. "I wish my son, Marcus," says Niebuhr, "to believe all the letter of the Gospel narrative, though "my criticism can so easily demolish it." But what did son Marcus become, when, in manhood, he learnt the Paternal trick? Alas! a reactionist poltroon, with the motto "*Populus vult decipi, decipiatur!*" If this be the *fides christiana* of young Germany who will not sigh for the *prisca fides* of the antique world.

"Who dares think one thing and another tell,
"My heart detests him as the gates of hell."

reputation of a popular orator, gained by a warm fancy, and able lungs,—*vox et præterea nihil.*

He was a true scholar and recluse, who valued sound sleep by night, study and ease, far above all fame. Such a man

"Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes."

He would write anonymously, if at all,—take any name,—gladly steal from the world, and not a stone tell where he lies.

It requires great moral courage to pass the fire of orthodoxy. "If to be honest as the world goes," says Mr. Justice Talfourd, "is to be one of ten "thousand, to be honest *as the mind works*, is to "be one man of a million." Even the dauntless Wilkes was daunted here: "I remain, however, "sound in the faith, and will keep to my good "orthodox mother, the Church of England, to the "last moment of its—legal establishment." And so Horne Tooke, "Bosville and I have entered into "a strict engagement, to belong for ever to the "established church, the established government, "the established language. *Do* but establish, and "we are convinced of its propriety." Reimarus was no man of bronze or of iron, to pass the fortresses of superstition and intolerance, ably served by well-disciplined mercenaries,—to pass the fire also of those dreadful rifle-pits,—secret slanderers, —compared with which the charge at Balaklava was a trifle. In a word Reimarus resembled the

English Bishops.* "Rich men furnished with ability, "living peaceably in their habitations,—honoured "in their generations," regarded as, "the glory of "their times." Peace and repose their dear delight,

"Content to dwell in decencies for ever."

Lessing publishes the Fragments.

Lessing saw all the learning of the ancient world stood revealed to Reimarus; he saw, it was his timid nature, which had kept him silent. Why keep under a bushel, what might give light to all in the house? One seventh part of Reimarus would outweigh seven "budge Doctors" of the Theologic "fur." The kindest, gentlest, noblest of the sons of Adam had said: "If it were not so, "I would have told you." Ought we then to conceal the truth? He had a romantic love of truth, however neglected and decried. With Middleton, he looked upon the discovery of any thing which is true as a valuable acquisition to society; which cannot possibly hurt or obstruct the good effect of

* When such Right Reverend Fathers forget themselves, they are sometimes roughly reminded,—they are but men! See a very amusing scene, between an English Bishop and Goethe, in Eckermann; (Gespräche mit Goethe, vol. III., p. 327), as the passage is accidentally omitted in Oxenford's masterly translation, we subjoin an extract: "Hold! when "your sermons on the terrors of hell-fire torments, harrow the weak "souls in your congregations, so that some have lost their senses, and "ended their days in a madhouse!—when ye sow the pernicious seeds "of doubt, in the minds of your Christian hearers, by many orthodox "dogmas, quite untenable by reason,—involving the half strong, half "weak, in a labyrinth from which death alone will extricate them,—&c."

any other truth whatsoever: for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain which fall separately into the river, mix themselves at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current. What though the highest classes in rank, wealth, and commerce were cold and indifferent to aught, but the most practical bearings of the subject,—the balance in their banker's book, he would brave the "world's dread laugh" and withering sneer.*

Nor did he dread the influence of truth upon the people. The poor people! he thought, with Jean Paul, everywhere are they invited into the court of the palace, when the heaviest burdens of war or of peace are to be carried away; everywhere are they driven out of it, when light, the greatest of treasures is to be communicated. With what right does any one class demand exclusive possession of light?—unless indeed it means also to claim exclusive possession of the iniquitous power of ruling more absolutely from its own light over others' darkness.

Can a state permit the development of the faculties of human nature only to certain individuals, as it grants titles and orders?

But upon this matter the old arguments,—the hoary satellites of despotism, still exist; namely,

* Lessing even defended the thrice-eccentric (Amory's) "John Buncle," Charles Lamb's favorite book, from the shafts of Wieland, Vol. 29, p. 495, Berlin, 1794.

that the people, like horses and birds in the mill or fowling floor, serve both their own interests and the interest of the state, much better when blinded.

But these decrepit servants of tyranny knavishly assume that the same sunlight which is useful on the mountains, is mischievous in valleys; and that want of education, though it will not protect the high against corruption, will the low: that truth misunderstood can never become truth misused, except among the people.

Lessing thought the time was come; and do what we will, man's reason is at length awake, and aroused like a giant refreshed with wine.

He resolved to publish the great work of Reimarus in fragments, and to abide the consequence.

Mendelsohn.

Another circumstance, which attached Lessing to the liberal camp, was his friendship for the Jewish philosopher, Mendelsohn.

"Blest with each talent and each art to please"

Lessing saw this most amiable of men utterly disregarded by the world of rank and fashion,—he was of a class proscribed.*

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* Their friendship often admitted playful raillery.

Lessing. "How did you rocognise my hand, in the pamphlet?"

Mend. "My dear friend, I thought no one, but you, could display "such total ignorance of the Bible."

At his first introduction to Madame Lessing, Mendelsohn brought in his hand a bouquet of the sweetest flowers, a present and peace-offering to soften the bad impression of his beard and gaberdine. Mendelsohn's son—"of virtuous father, virtuous son," was also distinguished, as giving birth to the late amiable and eminently accomplished composer.

The prejudice, which would exclude from our sympathies and communion of heart these "brethren "of the Lord, after the flesh" is in our day, fortunately, well-nigh obsolete. To learn the full power of prejudice we must transplant ourselves to the terrorist reign of intolerance. This will enable us also to test, by her genuine fruits, the true nature of Bibliolatry. Her votaries, among the civilized portion of the human family, are specially three,—the Hebrew, the Christian and the Moslem. These all "bow the knee to one alone,"—all recognise one supreme common Father, with the slight difference of name Eloah* or Allah. But the rival claims to verbal inspiration of their traditional Scriptures,—Old Testament and Talmud,—New Testament and Tradition,—Korân and Sonnah, long rendered Hebrew, Christian and Moslem more mutually "hateful and "hating," if possible, than the *united* North and South American states, that is, with an enmity as implacable as that of the most imbruted Atheists, or the most benighted votaries of Fetichism and Devil-worship. Our friends under the Oxford cowl can scarcely realize the true horrors of the Crusades,

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* Or far more common 'Elohim' (Gods), a word like our Sunday, derived from Pagan ancestry If we abstract the consideration of revelation, Polytheism would precede by many ages Theism. Simplification and generalization is a gradual process. The plural name in Genesis seems an archaism derived from the older religion.

Egypt probably first saw Theism exhibited as the esoteric doctrine.—Abram may have been initiated and adopted from the hierarchy much of the Theocracy, which was subsequently revived and systematized among the Hebrew race by Moses.

or they would hardly point to mediæval times as one of the brightest æras in our humanity.

The Christian, we fear, took the lead in bigotry and zeal.

> "In destruction of Maumetrie"
> "Increase of Christes law,

was best shown, says Chaucer.

> "To chace these pagans, in those holy fields,
> "Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
> "Which fourteen hundred years ago, were nailed,
> "For our advantage, to the bitter cross."

Mohammed's patience was, at last, quite exhausted: and he was in the end too apt a scholar in Dr. Johnson's school of "good haters." In the Korân we read, when "the trumpet calls together "the nations to judgment—all '*red whiskers and* "*grey eyes* [زُرْق و اصهبُ السّبال] shall be gathered, "on the left,—as fuel for the fire.'" "These," says the Arab commentator Beidhâwi, "are the people "of *Rome* (Franks), beyond idolaters in their deadly "hostility to us, and therefore most abominable to "Arabs."

With the Saracen was included in one ban the other branch of the lineage of Abraham.* In spite

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* Christians attribute the degraded state of Israel to the accomplishment of a curse pronounced by their ancestors who put Jesus to death. "His blood be on us and on our children"! But all we know of the Jews applies to those in Christendom or the Mahommedan empire. Now the insertion of these words in the sacred books of the Christians, naturally led to their accomplishment, and the Mahommedan, a sect of Christians, would naturally inherit the same abhorrence for the Jews.

of David and the Son of David, "burn the Jew" was long the heritage of the Christian, bequeathed religiously from father to son. The dramatists caught the tone of the monkish writers of *mysteries*, and basely pandered to this inhuman thirst for Jewish blood. Marlow's "Jew of Malta" presents such diabolical features of mind and body, as never existed, but in an imagination the most depraved. And so the stage, the natural antidote against too much priest-craft, became the auxiliary of prejudice. Poor human nature! Shakespear's Jew of Venice, while it seemed to gratify the same base feelings, in reality detected and laid them bare. For what a home lesson did the art of our immortal bard convey, to those who had "ears to hear," from the lips of Shylock!

"If a Jew wrong a Christian what is his humility? revenge: "if a Christian wrong a Jew what should be his sufferance by "Christian example? why *revenge*. The villainy *you teach me* I "will execute."

In the hate and vindictive malice of the Jew, Christian intolerance is made to recognise its own ugly and mis-shapen offspring.

Nor is the leaven of mediæval bigotry quite extinct among us. Devout as we English may appear, there are devils, which go not forth at all by prayer and fasting, — and intolerance is one. Where do we find a more Christian gentleman, in every good sense of the term, than Sir

Francis Goldsmid, and yet how tardily was the battle won, which allowed to sit in parliament, a chosen representative of our capital. Many a Hebrew of the present day,—as the candid and philosophic Salvador, Franck, Munk and Dukes,—differ far more from the mediæval Jew, than many a present Christian, from those who burnt them. To drive superstition out of its den, to "drag the "struggling savage into day," were a thirteenth labour for Heracles.

Nathan the Wise.

"I will preach to them from my pulpit, the "stage," said Lessing; and my text shall be: "Sirs, "ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another," —and Nathan the wise was the result. Boccaccio's "Three Rings" supplied a nucleus for the plot, and the photograph of his unconscious friend Mendelsohn supplied the angelic features of the Jewish sage in the piece,—the ideal of pure and perfect morality.

"Nathan" was performed by Greek actors at Constantinople, in 1842. On the second performance the majority of the audience were Turks; their interest in the piece was intense, and though they seemed, at times, a little less tolerant than Saladin, at the plain speaking of the Jew, yet the story of 'the Three Rings' produced a manifest sensation. And at the close the "middle wall of

"partition" gave way before the flood of gentler sentiments and more humane sympathies.

"Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto."

Moslems, with Greeks by their side, repeatedly cheered with enthusiasm the appeal from the stage, —the kindly recognition of the ties of brotherhood.

The close of Lessing's life.

And what was the result? Poor Lessing! It is the old story, monkey's fare,—more kicks than halfpence. "I am not the first, and I shall not be "the last," said Socrates. And Plato playfully describes a public, hurt and angry,—kicking and biting those, who first turned them from shadows to the light of day. "I will kill thee and love thee, "after." The cross itself attests the fate of a reformer. Oxford, that stoned the prophets, now raises a stately cenotaph to her Marian martyrs. Lessing who now figures elsewhere, from the Walhalla to the Crystal Palace, was barely allowed to die in peace. The sting of the bee protects the hive, but the insect's life flows, with the wound which it inflicts.—*Vitam impendere vero.* Calumny pursued him with relentless rage; even Semler, the liberal theologian, ("liberal with a vengeance," bishop Blomfield elegantly styles him,) satirized our author, as placed by the lord mayor of London in a lunatic asylum.*

* "I am too well acquainted," Lessing answers, "with the great

The Vienna gazette boldly taxed him with having received a Jewish bribe of a thousand ducats; nor would it insert the refutation of his indignant friends.

Baron Jacobi grieved over his friend as a pantheist. Lessing, forsooth, had said in conversation: "Who knows, Baron, whether, hereafter, we shall "not be falling in that shower, or exhaling perfume "in yonder rose?" And thus a jest was turned, by this proser, into an awful reality. The imputation broke the heart of the tender and affectionate Mendelsohn. Nor were there wanting fabricated death-bed scenes of recantation,—so consolatory to old women, of either sex. The plague-struck Pericles pointed, with a bitter smile, to the amulet, which the women had hung about his neck. Fear to give pain makes the hero "play the woman," at those moments. Lessing had said: "I perhaps shall "tremble in my dying hour, but before my dying "hour I shall never tremble." Lessing knew well the tricks of pious fraud; how the monks had foisted into the "Canterbury Tales," the "Parson's tale," of cant and recantation:—how a lying monument can change, like Lord Kenyon, Julian the apostate into Julian the apostle; and he vowed, in bitterness of spirit: "I will send for a public notary, "to testify, I do not die a Christian."

"Bedlam, in which we all live, to marvel if the Bedlamite majority, would "gladly shut me up in a little private madhouse of my own."

Sore is the trial, (Coleridge calls it *duspathy*, as the opposite to *sympathy*,) when false religion can turn the milk of human kindness, even in woman's breasts, to gall and wormwood. Lessing had to drink this bitter cup to the dregs. So strong was public feeling at one period, that the grandson of Reimarus himself crossed the street, to avoid the heretic. Lessing's own words, when his boy, an infant a few days old, died: "I call him, without "a father's vanity, wise; for he cast but one look on "this world,—and left it!" reveal to us, painfully, how himself longed for that "land of the leel," "where the wicked cease from troubling and the "weary are at rest."

In a word, Lessing was the Phœnix of his own fable, "which appeared, at length, once in the "whole century.* The birds and beasts gaped,— "they stared at the prodigy, in a transport of admi- "ration. 'Unhappy bird', said the wisest of them, "'the only bird of his species! he is doomed to a "'life of solitude.'"

"Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land?
"All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
"Painful pre-eminence! yourself to view
"Above life's weakness, and its comforts too."

Lessing's Nathan was the last song of the Swan,— most musical, most melancholy; and he died singing

* Campe, the lexicographer, applies to him the words of Shakespeare:
"He doth bestride the narrow world,
"Like a colossus; and we petty men
"Walk under his huge legs."

it. "After that production," said his friend Mendelsohn, "he might well be content to die." Nature could not improve upon the work—and she broke the mould. "It breathes," says Müller, "the air "of a pure, serene and happy climate, and a fra- "grance wafted from the blossoms on his grave."

PREFACE BY LESSING.

(Unfinished.)

BIBLIOLATRY.

Καλόν γε τὸν πόνον, ὦ
Χριστε, σοι πρὸ δόμων λατρεύω,
τιμῶν μαντεῖον ἕδραν.

By Bibliolatry, I understand that veneration, which, at divers times, in divers manners, has been claimed for the Bible, and particularly for the books of the New Testament.

I take *Latry* therefore not in the sense of the Catholic Church, according to which it denotes a veneration and a service, as they belong only to God; and am far from having formed the whole compound word *Bibliolatry* after *Idolatry*.

It is only because I hate long titles, and because under this every thing may pretty well be brought which I have to adduce in my defence against the distortion of an ignorant and malicious zealot, who would deprive me of the name of a Christian.

I thought I might be allowed to prefer an equivocal brevity to a tedious periphrasis. Titles of books, like Christian names, are given not to

characterize, but to distinguish. The lines quoted above are in the original not addressed to Christ, but to Phœbus.* Ion speaks in Euripides while sweeping the stairs before the temple of Apollo. I too do not consider it an inglorious work to sweep the threshold at least before the seat of divine inspiration.

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* *Φοιβε.* Euripid., Ion., Act I., v. 128—130.

LETTER I.

A PARABLE

Quæ facilem ori paret bolum.
ETYMOLOGISTA VETUS.

With a slight request and a parting letter in consequence, to the Rev. Mr. Goeze in Hamburg, 1778.

REVEREND MAN!

I might say reverend *friend*, did I seek to prepossess the world slyly in my favour, by a public appeal to my friendships.

But it is not my wont to raise prejudice against a neighbour, by proclaiming myself his friend.

Yet justly might I style *him* friend, who has met me with obligations; whom I have been led to know by means that would be distasteful to many;* to whom I still feel obliged, were it only for this, that his watchman-voice has hitherto been pleased to spare my name.

However, as I said, I no more seek to gain through my friends, than I wish them to lose through me.

* By strictures from the Pulpit.—TRANSL.

Therefore, *Venerable Sir!* only, be so good as to take the following trifle into some consideration. But specially I urge you, soon as possible, to declare your sentiments upon the subjoined request, not as a polemic only, but as an honest man and a Christian.

The Parable.

A wise and energetick King of a very great Realme had in his capital Citie, a Palace of an Extent altogether immeasurable, and an Architecture altogether peculiar.

Immeasurable was the Extent: because he had assembled about him therein, all the Assistants, or Instruments of his Government, whom he employed.

Peculiar was the Architecture: because it was, in some Degree, at variance with all received Rules; but still it pleased and answered its Purpose.

It pleased: chiefly through the Admiration, which Simplicitie and Grandeur always excite, when they seem not so much to need as to despise Richness and Ornament.

It answered its Purpose: through Durabilitie and Convenience.

For many, many Years stood the entire Palace: it had the self-same Purity and Perfection which the Architects had imparted with their last Touch: When viewed from without, there was something

unintelligible in it; but viewed from within, Light and Coherence everywhere.

Those who conceited themselves to be Connoisseurs in Architecture were mightilie offended by its outer Sides, which were pierced by a few windowes only, here and there, large and small, round and square; but supplied in Compensation with many and divers Doors and Gates of manifold Form and Size.

It was inconceivable, how sufficient Light could come through so few Windowes into so many Chambers. For it occurred to but very few, that the noblest Chambers received their light from Above.

It was inconceivable, what purpose so many and manifold Entrances answered, since one grand Portal on each side would be more suitable and render the same Service. For it occurred to few that these many Entrances led those called into the Palace, the shortest and surest Way to the Spot where they might be wanted.

And thus there arose among these self-constituted Criticks many a Dispute, most hotly maintained by those who had enjoyed the most imperfect View of the inner Part of the Palace.

There was indeed something in the Matter, which seemed, at the first Glance, likely to make the Dispute very slight and short; but the Dispute grew thereby most complicated and its continuance most obstinate. People thought, to wit, that they

possessed divers old Plans derived, as was said, from the original Architects of the Palace; and these Plans were found to be marked with Words and Cyphers of which the Language and Character were well nigh lost.

Every one therefore explained for himself these Words and Cyphers after his own Pleasure. Every one constructed for himself out of these old Plans a new one to his own liking; in favour of which new one many a Man, here and there, oft allowed himself to be so transported, that he not only himself swore to it, but sometimes persuaded, sometimes compelled others to swear to it.

Few were those who said: "What are your "Plans to us? This or another: they are all alike "to us. Enough, that we, every moment, feel, "that the most benign Wisdom fills the whole "Palace, and that Beauty, Order, and Blessedness "alone spread themselves thence over the whole "Land."

These few—they were often badly off! For when, in merrie mood, they sometimes brought the Light a little nearer to one of those sundrie Plans, then were they denounced by those who had sworn to this Plan, as Incendiaries of the Palace itself. But they cared not, and thus became fit Associates of those who were working within the Palace, with neither Time nor Inclination to meddle with differences, which to them were nought.

Once upon a Time,—when the Contest about the

Plans was not indeed adjusted, but only slumbering, —once upon a Time, about Midnight, there was suddenly heard the Voice of the Watchmen: "Fire! "Fire in the Palace!"

And what happened? Then upstarted every one from his Couch; and every one, as though the Fire were not in the Palace but in his own House, ran to fetch the most precious Article which he fancied he possessed,—to fetch his own Plan. "Let "us only save that!" everyone thought. "If the "Palace is burning, the Palace stands here as "essentially as there." And so everyone ran into the Street with his Plan, where, instead of hasting to the help of the Palace, they would first point out to one another in their own Plans whereabouts the Palace probably was on Fire. "Look, Neigh- "bour! here it is on Fire! Here the Fire is best "encountered." — "Or rather here, Neighbour; "here!" — "What have you both got in your "heads? it is *here*, it is on Fire!"—"What danger "would there be, if it were on Fire there? But "it is certainly here that it is on Fire!"—"Let "who will extinguish it here. I shall not extin- "guish it here!"—"And I not here!"—"And I "not here!"

Through these busy Squabblers the Palace itself might have been consumed had it been on Fire.— But the affrighted Watchmen had taken a Northern-Light for a Conflagration.

The Request.

A pastor is one thing, a librarian* another. Their names differ not more in *sound*, than do their duties and obligations in *nature*. In a word, I think, the pastor and the librarian stand in the same relation to each other as the shepherd and the botanist.

The botanist wanders o'er hill and dale, he narrowly examines forest and field, in order to find out some little herb, to which Linnæus has hitherto given no name. How does it gladden his heart if he finds one! How little does he care whether this new plant be poisonous or not! He thinks if poisons are not useful (and who can say they might not be so?), yet, useful it is at least that the poisons be known.

But the shepherd knows only the herbs of his sheepwalk; he values and cultivates those herbs alone which agree best with his sheep, and are most palatable to them.

So it is with us, Reverend Man!—I am the guardian of library-treasures; and would not willingly be the dog in the manger:† yet neither would I be the stable-boy who brings hay to the rack for every hungry horse. If I find something among the treasures entrusted to me, which I believe not to be known: I give notice of it. First in our catalogues; and then by degrees, as I find it

* Lessing was librarian at Wolfenbüttel.—Transl.

† Der Hund, der das Heu bewacht.

helps to fill up a gap, or set any matter right, by publishing it. I am quite indifferent whether one person pronounce it important, or another unimportant; whether it edify the one or scandalize the other. Useful and hurtful are as much relative ideas as great and small.

You on the other hand, Venerable Sir, value literary treasures solely by their influence on your congregation, and would rather be too anxious than too supine. What matters it to you, whether a thing be known or not known? if it might offend one of the least of those entrusted to your spiritual superintendence.

Quite right! I commend you for it, Reverend Sir. But while I commend you for doing your duty, don't you scold me for doing mine;—or, which is the same thing, for thinking I do it.

You would "tremble before your dying hour, "if you had taken the least part in publishing the "fragments in question."

I perhaps shall tremble in my dying-hour, but *before* my dying-hour I shall never tremble. Least of all for having done what all men of sense now wish the ancient librarians had done (if possible) with the writings of Celsus, Fronto, and Porphyry, in the libraries of Alexandria, Cæsarea, and Constantinople. For the writings of Porphyry, says a man well informed on such matters, many a friend of religion in our day would willingly give in exchange a pious Father of the Church.

I trust you, Reverend Sir, will never say; "The "writings of those ancient foes of Christianity cer- "tainly ought to have been more carefully preserved. "But why keep those of the moderns, who after "seventeen hundred years could surely say nothing "new?"—

Who knows that, without having heard them? Who of those who come after us will believe that without seeing it?

Besides, I am firmly of opinion that the world and Christianity will last so long, that with regard to religion, the authors of the first two *thousand* years after Christ will be as important to the world, as those of the first two *hundred* are to us.

Christianity moves on with its own eternal gradual pace: nor do eclipses bring the Planets out of their path. But the sects of Christianity are the phases of the same, which could not subsist in other fashion, but by the stopping of the whole course of Nature, when Sun, Planets, and Observer continue at the same point. God protect us from this frightful stagnation!

Therefore, Reverend Man, censure me at least less severely, for having been so honest as to rescue from perishing, and bring to light, not only a very Christian work of Berengarius,* but also some very Anti-Christian fragments.

However this is not the request, Venerable Sir,

* In 1770 Lessing discovered and published Berengarius' answer to Lanfranc, "De corpore et sanguine Jesu Christi."—TRANSL.

which I have to make. Of some folks I request nothing which I have not a right to demand. My peculiar request is of a kind you cannot very well refuse to grant. You have done me injustice; and nothing more nearly concerns an honest man than to repair an act of injustice involuntarily committed.

Your wrong to me is this,—you have had the misfortune to explain a passage of mine utterly against the context. Your head was at the time more warm than clear. Let me illustrate this by a comparison.

A waggoner finds his heavy laden waggon stuck fast in deep mire; after many fruitless attempts to extricate himself, he says at last: "Since all the "cords break I must unload." Does this fairly imply that he was glad to unload, that he wilfully applied the weakest and most fragile cords, in order, with better grace, to be allowed to unload? If his employer require the waggoner to make good all damage—damage not from without, but from faulty packing within,—would this be just? Reverend Man, I am this waggoner, you this employer.

I said, if all objections against the Bible, of which reason is so productive, cannot be removed, still in the hearts of those who have gained an inward feeling of its essential truths, Religion would still remain undisturbed and uninjured. To support this, I wrote the passage doomed to suffer at your hands so unkind an expansion. I must have meant, it is made to appear, that no answer at all can be given

to the objections against the Bible, and that it would be useless to desire to answer them. I must, it is made to appear, have advised the *Theologian* to take—the sooner, the better—his last unfailing refuge in the Christian, that thereby a weak but boastful enemy might the sooner gain the day.

This, Venerable Sir, is not the true representation of my ideas. However you may not have intended so widely to misrepresent my views, it may be, confiding in your good cause, supposed to be attacked by me, you were too hasty—too precipitate.

Those, Reverend Man, who are the most easily led to act precipitately are not the worst men. They are as ready to own their rashness; and such confession is often more instructive than cold, considerate infallibility.

Accordingly, I expect from you, Reverend Sir, that you will not fail, in one of the next articles of your *Voluntary Contributions*,* to make a declaration, as good as voluntary, to the following purpose; that after all there still remains a certain point of view in which my passage attacked by you may appear very harmless; that you overlooked this point of view, but that you no longer do so having been undeceived by me.

Only such a declaration can put a stop to the suspicion, which you, Venerable Sir, seem wishful to spread as to my views. Only after such a decla-

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* A Religious Periodical conducted by the Rev. Mr. Goeze.—TRANSL.

ration can I be solicitous as to what it may further please you to record concerning me.

Without such a declaration, Reverend Man, I must allow you to write—as I allow you to preach.

The Parting Letter.

My Reverend Sir,

By means of the foregoing pacific sheets, I thought to have done with you. I rejoiced in thinking of the next *Voluntary Contributions*, where your sacred fist would again wave over me the Christian Banner.

But, while the Press was not speedy enough for me, or I for the Press,* I receive parts 61, 62, 63 of the aforesaid *Contributions*,—and am as it were annihilated!

Has the same man written this? How will posterity, into whose hands the *Voluntary Contributions* will no doubt come, explain so sudden a skip from white to black?

"Goeze," will posterity say, "was Goeze the "man, in the same breath to mumble between his "teeth soursweet compliments, and bawl out of his full "throat loud calumnies, towards one and the self-"same author? Should he act at once the cat and "the boar? The cat who sneaks about the hot "porridge; and the boar who blindly runs upon the

* Lessing, it would seem, accounts for being behindhand in answering Goeze's Contributions either by his own laziness, or the slowness of the Press.—Transl.

"spear? That is incredible! In part 55 his zeal "is so measured, he so avoids names; he names "nor sack nor ass, which his stick belabors: and all "at once, in part 61, it is *Lessing* by name from "beginning to end; must Lessing be pinched by "name, as often as he (Goeze) has the cramp in "his orthodox fingers? There, he hardly wishes to "move the water, and here, Splash! Dash! That "is inconceivable! There must be wanting, between "parts 55 and 61 of these precious sheets, those "which would account for this."

So will posterity say, Venerable Sir. Yet what care we for posterity? Perhaps it will not say so. Enough that yourself know best how vastly posterity will be mistaken; and I merely touch on this chord in excuse to the now existing world,—as far as that world busies itself about you and me—in case my future tone towards the Rev. Mr. Goeze should have far more licence than I have hitherto allowed myself.

For in truth, Venerable Sir, the obtrusive pinches with which you assail me, are gradually becoming too many! Do not think I shall enumerate them: it would tickle you to perceive I felt them all. I simply tell you the result. I will not be decried as the man, less favourably disposed, than yourself, to the Lutheran Church. I feel that I am better disposed towards her than one, who would fain pass off, as holy zeal for God's cause, his own tender regards for a lucrative office.

Have you, Reverend Man, the slightest spark of

Luther's spirit?—You? who cannot even take a just survey of Luther's scholastic system?—You? why on the side where Luther's edifice sinks a little, you allow, with silent approbation, unwashed, nay perfidious hands, to screw it up even far above the builder's level!—You? why, you pelt with stones the honest—yes honest man, who, though unbidden, yet in sincerity, calls out to the men at the screw: "Screw no more there! Take care the brickwork "don't give way!"

And why stone the honest man? Because forsooth an unknown architect's advice to take the building down altogether, was by this honest man—what?—approved? no!—seconded? no!—intended to be carried out, begun to be carried out? No, No! only because the honest man thought he had no right to suppress it.

O sancta simplicitas!—But I am not yet come to that pass, where the poor man was barely allowed time to utter this. Let him who can and will, hear and judge; first hear, first pass judgment upon us.

Oh that he could do it, he whom I should most desire to have as my judge!—Thou, Luther!—Great man, ill understood! and by none less understood, than by the short-sighted wrong-heads, who, with your slippers in their hand, and an affected noisy zeal, saunter along the road macadamized by you!—Thou hast released us from the yoke of tradition: who will release us from the more intolerable yoke of the letter? Who will bring us at length a

Christianity, such as thou would'st teach—such as Christ himself would teach, in our day? Who——

But I forget *myself;* and still more should I forget you, Reverend Sir, if I on any utterance of this sort, should say confidentially to you: "Reverend "Sir, till that time come, which neither you nor "I may live to see—yet come it will, aye marry, "to a certainty, come it will—till that time come, "I say, would it not be better for the like of us "to be silent? That the like of us should be "quite passive? What one of us would too much "check, the other might too much hurry on, so "that each might be only furthering the other's "views. What if, Reverend Sir, we were to allow "the battle, which I have still to fight out with "you, to be the first and last. I am willing not "to throw away another word upon you, except "what I have already thrown away."

But no; you will not like that. Goeze has never yet allowed any opponent of his the last word; though he always takes care to have the first. He will consider as an attack, what I was obliged to say in my own defence. For the tilt-yard of the late *Ziegra** must not descend to him in vain.

I am sorry for it; for look you, Reverend Sir, when engaged with you I cannot but go against

* Probably some doughty controversialist, but I have not any *Conversation-Lexicon* at hand.—TRANSL.

the grain; and the furrows, which you would gladly force me to draw straight over consecrated ground, will I fear, become more and more crooked.

Not that I would wish to exaggerate (even if possible) every malicious allusion of yours; every (with a "Deo Volente") poisonous bite; every comical burst of your tragical commiseration; every sigh, with gnashing of teeth, that, alas! it is but a sigh;* every pastoral and dutiful hounding on of the higher temporal powers, wherewith you will henceforth lard and season your *Voluntary Contributions.* I am not so unreasonable as to ask any bird in the world for one feather other than he has. Besides spells of this kind have long since lost their credit.

But there is one thing I shall not be able to bear—your pride; which allows no one reason and learning who employs them in other fashion than yourself. Specially will my bile be excited if you continue to treat, so like a schoolboy and poltroon, my anonymous friend, known to you as yet only by unconnected fragments.

For, to balance the merits of man against man, —not cause against cause—this anonymous personage was of such weight, that, in every branch of learning, seven Goeze's would not counterbalance that man's seventh part. For this meantime, Reverend Sir, you may take my word.

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* And cannot inflict summary punishment—or an excommunicating *mâranâtha*.—TRANSL.

And so my knightly farewell* shall be short. "Write, Reverend Sir, and make others write, while "pen and paper last: I also write. If in the least "matter, which concerns myself or my anonymous "friend, I allow you to be right, where you are not "right: then can I no longer hold a pen."

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* On leaving the tilt-yard for the present.—TRANSL.

LETTERS II. AND III.

THESE two letters are omitted. In them Lessing takes refuge from the fierce fire of Protestant Bibliolaters, under the guns and forts of Patristic Traditionists—a dangerous expedient, as it again exposes us to a bondage, worse than Bibliolatry itself.

But Herr Lessing has so immersed himself in all this "reading never read," that he comes out encrusted with Monkish and Scholastic equivocations. We scarcely recognise the fair and candid Lessing; he has associated so long with those Arian and Athanasian "chimney-sweepers of the temple," that one could well believe he wore a black coat himself. —"*Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.*"

We may well take other ground. Are Protestant Bibliolaters consistent? Are there not many Provosts and Masters in Israel—richly endowed in order to defend the *verbal* inspiration of the Old as well as New Testament, — who enjoy their "*otium cum* "*dignitate*," as utterly ignorant of the very Hebrew vowel points, as were those "laziest of cattle," as Luther calls them, the Mitred Abbots?

LETTER IV.

AXIOMATA,
If such there be in these matters.

—acumine pollentibus notionem prædicati in notione subjecti indivulso nexu cum ea cohærentem pervidendi.
WOLFII, Ph. r.

Against the Rev. Mr. Goeze, in Hamburg, 1778.

THE sheet, or as many as there may be, which I sit down to write, might on this account become very troublesome to me, because I hardly know, *for* whom I write it. I only know *against* whom; and so little hope have I that it might possibly become *for* him, *against* whom it is directed, that I hardly venture to transform this hope into a wish.

On one passage which, my conscience bears witness, I wrote with consideration and with a good intention, the Reverend Mr. Goeze, in Hamburg, has made remarks, printed in two different newspapers, which stigmatized me as an adversary of the Christian Religion. I will not repeat the passage, as I have written it. And the less, as I wish to give a somewhat different order to the single positions, which I am supposed to have "*planted*

"*there as mere axioms.*" It may be that my antagonist, through this slight alteration, will learn to understand me better; particularly when he finds, that his own objections have assisted me to explain myself more clearly. It may be that, through this slight alteration, my positions will become really better than they were before. For who knows not that Axiomata are positions, the words of which one needs but to understand, in order to perceive their truth?

At the outset the Reverend Gentleman is greatly startled, that neither the attacks nor the defences of the Christian Religion, hitherto made, altogether please me. He is startled; but if I can only induce him first to look steadily at the matter, which makes him so shy, then will he, as I hope, pass it by composed. If I wished to play the hypocrite, I need only so explain myself, that all the blame of my disappointed expectation should fall on the *attacks* on religion.

That *these* are, without exception, altogether ill-directed, and wide of the mark, the Reverend Gentleman will willingly concede. Now suppose I were to say; "As the attack, so the defence. "How can the Theologian help it, that they would "not attack his good cause on any other side, or "with any better weapons? When fortresses are "besieged from above, downwards; then will people "begin to think of protecting them from above, "inwardly."

However, I despise all subterfuges; I despise everything which looks like a subterfuge. I have said it, and I say it again: the defences of the Christian Religion, up to this day, are in respect to themselves, far from being written with all the attainments of intellect,—with all the love of truth, —with all the earnestness which the weight and dignity of the subject demand. This, my general assertion, arises from induction as complete, and accurately weighed as circumstances rendered possible.

"*Well! let this induction be brought before our* "*eyes!*" my adversary exclaims in already triumphant tone. My Reverend friend, I should have much wished this demand had not been made to me in print. It is a true pulpit demand; and you know right well how a demand of this sort is met. —Even by a demand.

When I say, all quicksilver passes off in vapour over the fire, must I, in order to please him, who is not satisfied with the generality of my assertion, bring together all the quicksilver, which exists in nature, and make it pass off in vapour before his very eyes? I should, methinks, till I am enabled to do that, merely say: "Good friend, all the quick- "silver, which I have hitherto placed over the fire, "actually did pass off in vapour. If you know "of any that does not, bring it, that I may learn "the fact; and you shall have my thanks."

To bring to the chemical test all the countless works written, even during this century, for the

truth of the Christian Religion: what a demand! If indeed the Reverend Gentleman meant it in earnest,—if he did not merely wish to jeer me by saying so,—if he did not merely wish to feast himself upon my embarrassment,—make me recant, or submit me to an endless labor: well then, let him prove it by a mere trifle. This trifle is to cost him only one word. Namely: let him only name to me that work with which I am to make my first experiment of evaporation. Let him only name it to me; and I am ready. If it be one with which I am already acquainted, then I need have no apprehension. If it be one, with which I am not acquainted, and my experiment fail, so much the better. I willingly submit to endure a little shame for the sake of important information.

Only one proviso I must make. He must not affect to believe, that he who doubts of certain proofs of a matter, doubts of the matter itself. The least hint—by pointing the finger in that direction—is assassination. How can I help it, that in modern times they wished to raise secondary proofs to a certainty, and an evidence, which they positively could not have? How can I help it, that they would not leave the whole matter within the modest limits, where the earlier Theologians considered it to be sufficiently safe? Or is the history of Dogmas so little known to the Reverend Gentleman, that he knows nothing of these alterations? Why should he censure a man dissatisfied with these

novel alterations? In other respects, forsooth, he is no friend to Theological innovations. Why does he take these alone under his special protection against me? Is it because I have not in all cases expressed myself according to the language of the Theological Schools, which is familiar to him? I am an amateur in Theology, and not a Theologian. I have not been obliged to swear to any certain system. Nothing binds me to speak other language than my own. I pity all honest men, who are not so lucky, as to be able to say this of themselves.* But these honest men must not wish to cast the rope, with which they are fastened to the manger, about the horns of other honest men. Else my pity ceases: and I can do nothing but despise them. So much for the bugbear, which met the Reverend Gentleman at his entrance on the road. Now for the passage itself, which I feel compelled to rescue, not altogether in the same order, but in all its words and entire sense, from the misinterpretations of the Reverend Gentleman. The logical order of our thoughts is not always that, in which we communicate them to others. But it is that, which the antagonist must above all things find out, if his attack is to be according to equity. And,

* I therefore view with suspicion the novel church measure, of paying our Professors of Hebrew and Greek by her Canonries. It blinds the eyes and pinions the judgement. If my bread depended on the dirty notes of a provincial bank, I fear I should uphold its credit, though I thought it *shaky*. We must henceforth look to the London Professors for the independent testimony of Ancient Literature.—TRANSL.

therefore, the Reverend Gentleman ought to have begun with the third of my positions as follows:

I. (3).

THE BIBLE MANIFESTLY CONTAINS MORE THAN BELONGS TO RELIGION.

I need not repent of having written this. But, answer it as the Reverend Mr. Goeze,—I would not for the world! "In this position," he answers, "there lie two positions. Firstly: the Bible con- "tains that which belongs to Religion. Secondly: "the Bible contains more than belongs to Religion. "In the first position Mr. Aulic Councillor Lessing "admits that, which he has denied in the pre- "ceding one. If the Bible contains that which "belongs to Religion: then it contains Religion "itself, objectively."

I am frightened! Am I supposed to have denied *that the Bible contains Religion?* I? where have I done that? Immediately in the preceding one? Surely not by having said: the Bible *is* not Religion? Surely not by that?

My Reverend friend, if you have gone to work thus with all your antagonists! Is then *to be* and *to contain* one and the same thing? Are then these quite identical positions: namely, the Bible *contains* Religion, and the Bible *is* Religion? Surely in Hamburg they will by no means call in question the difference between *Gross* and *Nett.* There,

where so many articles have their fixed *tare*, will there not be allowed me a small tare on so costly an article as the Holy Scripture? Come, come, the Reverend Gentleman is surely not so little a man of business. For he continues: "*The second* "*position may be admitted, when we make a distinction* "*between what essentially belongs to Religion, and* "*what to the elucidation and confirmation of the* "*essential part.*"

Well! then we are bargaining about the gross. And how, if it contain useless package?—How, if there occur not a little in the Bible, which absolutely serves neither for the elucidation, nor the confirmation, even of the slightest tenet of Religion? What others—good Lutheran Divines—have asserted of whole books of the Bible, I surely may be allowed to assert of single notices in this and that book? At least one must be a Rabbi, or one who can dress a text for the pulpit,* in order to rummage up a bare possibility or a quibble, whereby there could be brought into any relation to Religion the *Yaimim of Anah*, the *Cherethites and the Pelethites of David*, "*the cloak*" which Paul forgot "*at Troas*," and a hundred other such things.

The position then, that *the Bible contains more than belongs to Religion*, is true in an unlimited sense. It can indeed become infinitely more ad-

* German, *Ein Homilet.*

vantageous to Religion by its proper application, than injurious by its misapplication. Misapplication is to be apprehended in all things; guard against it if you please. Only this should be done in a more fitting manner than in the following corollary of the Reverend Gentleman.

"*But should this position tend to the prejudice* "*of the Bible; then it is entirely powerless, just as* "*powerless as if I were to say:* '*Wolf's system of* "'*Mathematics contains Scholia, and these diminish* "'*the value of it.*'"

As was said, this position in my hands shall not do any injury to the Bible. It shall rather free it at once from numberless objections and scoffings, and re-instate it in its lost rights of ancient documents, to which we are bound to pay reverence and forbearance.

To come next to your example, Reverend Sir, I am more satisfied with it, than you think. The Scholia in Wolf's *Elements of Mathematics* do not certainly lessen the value of the same. But by being there they introduce things not demonstrated. Or think you the Scholia just as certain as the Theorems? Not but that Scholia may be demonstrated: only they do not require it here. It would be a waste of demonstration, if all the trifles, which might or might not be brought into a Scholion, were furnished with it. A similar waste of Inspiration is of just as little utility, but it infinitely more offends.

II. (4).

IT IS MERE HYPOTHESIS, THAT THE BIBLE IS EQUALLY INFALLIBLE IN THIS ADDITIONAL MATTER.

Is it not? But what then? "*Indisputable Truth.*" Indisputable? which has been so often disputed! which even at this day is disputed by so many! by so many who both are, and would be considered Christians. Not indeed Wittenberg Lutheran Christians—not indeed Christians by the Grace of Calov—but still Christians and even Lutheran Christians by the Grace of God.

Suppose however Calov and Goeze were right. The latter at least adduces so excellent a dilemma. "*Either*," says he, "*at least approved by God, or it* "*is not. In the first place, it is just as infallible, as* "*the essential. But if the last be assumed, then the* "*first also loses its certainty.*"

If this dilemma is right: then it must also hold good, if I, instead of "*additional matter*," put any other Subject, of which the same double Predicate seems to hold good. For instance: 'That which 'is *morally bad* has either come into existence 'through God, at least been approved by Him, or 'it has not. In the first case, it is just as divine, 'and therefore just as good as the *absolutely good.* 'But if the last be assumed, we cannot know whether 'God has created and approved of the morally good. 'For Bad is never without Good, and Good never 'without Bad.'

What does my reader think? shall we retain both dilemmas? or reject both? I determine for the last. For how? if God had conducted himself in the act of Inspiration with regard to the human additions, which Inspiration did not render impossible,—just as in the act of creation with regard to the *morally bad?* How? if He after the one and the other miracle had once taken place, had left that, which these miracles had produced, to its natural course? What harm does it do, that in this case the limits, between human additions and revealed truths, could no longer be so precisely determined? Surely the line of demarcation between the morally bad, and the morally good, is just as little defineable. But have we on that account no perception at all of good or bad? Would no revealed truths at all on that account be distinguished from human additions? Has then revealed truth no *inward* marks at all? Has its immediately divine origin left behind no trace on it, or in it, except the historical truth, which it has in common with so many petty narratives?

Thus I might make this, and many other objections to the Reverend Gentleman's syllogism. But he wishes to prove, not so much by syllogisms, as by similes and texts.

And will indeed these texts be indisputable? Would that they were so! Gladly would I forget that everlasting circle, whereby the infallibility of a book is proved from a passage in the same book; and the

infallibility of the passage, from the infallibility of the book.

But they are also so far from indisputable, that I must think the Reverend Gentleman has searched out the most doubtful, in order to reserve the more important for a better opportunity.

When Christ says of the Scripture, "*it bears* "*witness of him*," did he mean to say that it bears witness *only* of him? How do these words imply the homogeneousness of all Biblical books, as well in relation to their contents as their inspiration? Could not the Scripture bear witness of Christ just as well, if that only had been inspired, which is distinguished as express words of God or the Prophets?

And the πασα γραφη of Paul!—

I need not remind the Reverend Gentleman, he must first satisfy me with regard to the true explanation of this passage, before he proceeds so unhesitatingly to make use of it. Another construction gives to the words of Paul a quite different sense; and this construction is as grammatical,—as much in unison with the context,—has in its favour as many Theologians, old and new, as the construction approved of in the most common Lutheran lesson-books; so that I cannot see at all, why we must absolutely abide by this latter. Luther himself in his version has not so much followed the latter as the former.* He has read no και; and it is sad enough if through

* 2 Timothy III. 16, rendered by Luther: Denn alle Schrift von Gott eingegeben ist nütze zur Lehre, &c.

these variations—according as this και is taken or omitted—the main passage for settling all theology becomes so utterly tottering.

Lastly the "*steadfast prophetic word*"!

Whence the proof, that under the prophetic word all historical words are also understood? Whence? the historical words are the *vehiculum* of the prophetic word. But a *vehiculum* neither has, nor ought to have the power and nature of the medicine. What objection has the Reverend Gentleman to this representation? That it is not his own,—Wittenberg representation: that I know. But if this be all, Germany was to learn, by two newspapers: why not make the matter more easy for himself and me? Why not proclaim at once, that my whole passage flatly contradicts the compendiums of the Wittenberg Orthodoxy? Granted—with all my heart! could I have answered as shortly.

III. (1).

THE LETTER IS NOT THE SPIRIT, AND THE BIBLE IS NOT RELIGION.

If it be true, that the Bible contains more than belongs to Religion, who can forbid me to call it—as a book which contains both—*the Letter*; while I assign to the better part of the same Book,—which either refers to, or is itself Religion,—the name of the *Spirit?*

Even while assuming the inward testimony of the Holy Ghost this appellation is appropriate: For

since this witness more or less manifests itself, in those books and passages of Scripture only, which more or less aim at our spiritual improvement: what more reasonable than to call such books and passages of the Bible, the spirit of the Bible? Nay more. It would approach, methinks, to blasphemy to maintain the Power of the Holy Ghost to be displayed as efficaciously in the Mosaic Genealogy of Esau's descendants, as in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, recorded by Matthew. This difference between the Letter, and the Spirit of the Bible is in reality the same, as others—good Lutheran Divines—have long since made, between Holy Writ and the Word of God. Why has not the Reverend Mr. Goeze first assaulted these, before he imputes it as a crime to a poor layman to have trodden in their steps?

IV. (2.)

IT FOLLOWS, OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE LETTER AND AGAINST THE BIBLE, ARE NOT, ON THAT ACCOUNT, OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE SPIRIT, AND AGAINST RELIGION.

A consequence certainly shares the nature of the grounds whence deduced. That is partly demonstrated, partly proved. If objections against incidental elucidations of the main principles of the Christian Religion, are no objections against the main principles themselves: still less can objections against Biblical matters, which not so much as incidentally elucidate Religion, be objections against Religion.

I have now only to answer *the case* put by the Reverend Gentleman. Yes, if "*a country's constitution*"* strictly contain neither more nor less than the "*order of a country*,"* then that subject who wantonly objects to the *constitution of a country*, wantonly attacks the *order of a country*. But to what end, in that case, these very different denominations? why not call one another the order of a country, or the constitution of a country? The difference in name implies some difference in themselves. As for perfect Synonyms—there are none. But if one differ from the other, to attack one is not necessarily to attack the other. Be the circumstance ever so slight, which gave rise to the twofold denomination, still the objection may concern this slight circumstance alone; and what the Reverend Gentleman so tauntingly calls Antithesis is complete justification. I will explain myself by an example which is quite familiar to him: The collection of the Hamburg Laws by Mr. Syndic Klefeker, when finished, will contain the most complete and certain constitution of the city of Hamburg,—might also bear that title. Suppose then, it bear that title—can I make no objection to this work without setting myself in opposition to the authority of the Hamburg Laws? Might not my objection relate to the historical introduction, prefixed by Mr. Klefeker to each class of Laws? Have these historical intro-

* These were the absurd expressions of Goeze.—TRANSL.

ductions acquired the force of Laws, because printed in one volume with them? Whence does the Reverend Gentleman know that the historical books of the Bible are not something like these introductions?—books which as little need God's inspiration, or even approval, as these introductions call for the peculiar protection of the Hamburg Council and Corporation. Enough that all the Archives of the city stood open to Klefeker. If he has not used them with sufficient care: then let another do better; and that is all. It would be an abuse,—a needless squandering of legislative power, if two things so different, as law, and history of law, were invested with like authority.

V. (5).

There was Religion before there was a Bible.

Against this the Reverend Gentleman says: "*But "surely not before there was a Revelation.*" What he means by this is, to me, utterly inconceivable. Yes, a revealed Religion cannot exist before it has been revealed, but it can exist before it has been written down. All I would say is this: there was religion ere the least part thereof was committed to writing,—before one single book of that Bible existed, which is now made equivalent to Religion itself. To what purpose then this cross-grained question, which might make confusion in my ideas? I have no answer to give.

VI. (6).

CHRISTIANITY EXISTED BEFORE THE EVANGELISTS AND APOSTLES HAD WRITTEN. A PRETTY LONG TIME ELAPSED BEFORE THE FIRST OF THEM WROTE; AND A VERY CONSIDERABLE TIME, BEFORE THE WHOLE CANON WAS COMPLETED.

"All this," says the Reverend Gentleman, "I "can grant the editor."—*Can?* why only *can?*—The Reverend Gentleman *must.*

But if he must grant this, he will also grant, that the orally revealed Christianity existed much earlier than the written; that without being written it can subsist and spread. More than this I do not want, and I know not at all why he meets me with the question: "Was then Christianity exist-"ing, before Christ and the Apostles preached?"

This question is meant to render my position useless for its object; which object the following position contains. We shall see.

Here I should much like, by way of preliminary, to ask one or two questions; merely to inform myself,—merely in order to seize the Reverend Gentleman's whole meaning.—"If while Christ and his "apostles preached, as long as the extraordinary "gifts of the Holy Ghost were working in churches, "the propagation of the Christian Religion could "be *better* maintained by means of oral instruction, "than by writings:"* did the use of writings

* Those who have read Dr. Conyers Middleton's "Free Enquiry" must take the following as a mere *argumentum ad hominem.*—TRANSL.

first begin when these extraordinary gifts ceased, or did it begin earlier? If it began earlier, and it is undeniable that these gifts did not cease to exist at the same time with the Apostles, but continued for centuries: did, during that period, the gifts derive their evidence from the writings, or the writings from the gifts? The former supposition has no sense; and if the latter were the case, are not we very badly off, that the same writings, which the first Christians believed on the evidence of the gifts, we are bound to believe without this evidence? But if, on the contrary, the use of the writings did not begin sooner than when the gifts of miracles ceased: whence do we derive the proof, that the writings *have* not supplied already, as much as they were intended to do, the place of the gifts of miracles?

And yet it is clear from history that this is actually the case. It may be proved, that while the gifts of miracles,—particularly the immediate illumination of the Bishops,—existed, much less was made of the written word. It was even a crime to be disposed to believe the Bishop, only upon reference to the written word. And that not without solid reason. For the ἐμφυτος δωρεα της διδαχης which was in the Bishops, was the very same which had been in the Apostles; and when Bishops quoted the written word, they quoted it indeed in confirmation, but not as the source of their thoughts.

This again nearly brings me back to the object,

with which I have premised the position now in hand, and the next. To the conclusion, namely:

VII. (7).

HOWEVER MUCH VALUE MAY BE ATTACHED TO THESE WRITINGS; STILL THE WHOLE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION CANNOT POSSIBLY DEPEND UPON THEM.

That is, if it be true, that the Religion of the Old and New Testament was already revealed, a considerable time before the least part of it was composed in writing; and a still longer time existed before all the books were ready, which now rank in the Canon of the Old and New Testament: then surely Revealed Religion must be conceivable without these books. I say, without these books. I do not say, without what these books contain. He who makes me say this, instead of that, makes me say nonsense, in order to have the great and saintly merit of refuting nonsense. Again and again I say: without these books. And indeed, far as I know, no orthodox person has as yet maintained, that Religion has been originally revealed, for the first time, in one of these books, and gradually grown up just as the other books have been added. On the contrary learned and reflecting Divines unanimously admit, that sometimes more, sometimes less of Revealed Religion has been in these books occasionally only preserved.—This *more or less* would have been still true, before it was preserved oc-

casionally in writing: and are we to consider it true now, only because preserved in writing?—

Here indeed the Reverend Gentleman tries to help himself out by a distinction: The truth of Religion, he pretends, may be one thing, and our conviction of this truth another. "The truth of "the Christian Religion," says he, "by all means "rests on itself: it subsists on its agreement with "the Attributes and the Will of God, and on the "historical certainty of the facts,* upon which its "doctrines are partly founded. But our conviction "of the truth of the Christian Religion rests wholly "and solely upon these writings." But if I rightly understand these words: the Reverend Gentleman either says something very unphilosophical, or he refutes himself, and is entirely of my opinion. It may be also that he was compelled to express himself so unphilosophically, in order not to appear too plainly to be of my opinion. For let us only consider! If the truth of the Christian Religion *partly*,—(this *partly* indeed he has not expressly written, but his meaning necessarily demands it),—if it, I say, rests *partly* on itself, that is, on its agreement with the Attributes and the Will of God, and partly on the historical certainty of the facts, upon which some of its doctrines are grounded: does there not arise, out of this two-fold ground, a two-fold convincing power also? Has not every individual ground its own convincing power for itself? What need

* *Factorum* in the pedantic original of Goeze.—TRANSL.

has one of the two to borrow its convincing power from the other? Is it not indolent levity, to set down the convincing power of the one to the credit of the other? Is it not light-minded indolence, to wish to extend the convincing power of the one to both? Why do things, necessarily believed true,—because in accordance with the Attributes and the Will of God,—require for their reception the historical proof of other things, connected in time and space?

Suppose it quite true, that the Biblical books prove all the facts on which the Christian Doctrines are partly founded: prove facts—this books can do; and why should they not be able to do so? Enough that the Christian doctrines are not all founded upon facts. Some are founded, it is admitted, upon their intrinsic truth; and how can the intrinsic truth of any position depend on the authority of the book, in which it has been propounded? This is manifest contradiction. I cannot sufficiently admire one question, which the Reverend Gentleman proposes, with the certain assurance, "*one* answer" alone is possible. "If the books of the New "Testament had not been written, and had not "reached us, would there indeed," he asks, "have "remained in the world a trace of that which "Christ has done and taught?"—God forbid, I should ever think so meanly of the precepts of Christ, as to venture to give this question the straightforward answer *no!* I would not, though an angel from heaven dictated it, much less when

a Lutheran clergyman would put it into my mouth.—Everything which happens in the world, though man cannot always point to them, must leave traces behind: and would thy precepts only, divine Friend of Man, which thou didst command to preach, not write, have no effect, when only preached, to make men recognise their origin? Would thy words be words of life, only when transformed into dead letters? Are books the only way to enlighten and improve, is oral tradition nothing? if subject to a thousand falsifications, intentional or otherwise, are not books so? Might not God, by the same display of his immediate power, have guarded oral tradition against falsifications, as we say he does the books? Alas for the man, Almighty God!—the would be preacher of thy word, who boldly asserts, that Thou, to attain thy object, had'st but the one way, which it has pleased thee to make known to him! Alas for the Theologian, who, with the exception of this single way, which he sees, flatly denies all other ways, which he does not see. May I never, oh Good God, be so orthodox—so presumptuous!

VIII. (8.)

IF THERE WAS A PERIOD, IN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION HAD ALREADY BEEN SO EXTENSIVELY DIFFUSED, IN WHICH IT HAD ALREADY GAINED SO MANY SOULS,—IN WHICH NEVERTHELESS NOT A LETTER HAD BEEN PENNED OF THAT, WHICH HAS COME DOWN TO US,

—THEN IT MUST ALSO BE POSSIBLE, THAT EVERYTHING WHICH THE EVANGELISTS AND APOSTLES HAVE WRITTEN MIGHT AGAIN BE LOST, AND YET THE RELIGION TAUGHT BY THEM MIGHT STILL SUBSIST.

It is not parody and burlesque,—it is in heartfelt earnestness, I turn, in part, the words of the Reverend Gentleman against himself, and say: 'With all the esteem, which I have for the clever-'ness and merits of the Reverend Gentleman, in 'other respects, about Theological literature, I still 'cannot refrain from declaring, that what he ob-'serves against this position is most dangerous '*heterodoxy*, or most malicious *slander*.'—Let him choose! indeed both are at his service.

In the first instance then: his observations with regard to slander.—"A palpable sophism!" he cries. Aye! palpable* to one whose hands are more quick of perception than his brains. "For," says he, "instead of, 'not a *letter* had been *penned*, &c.' "put 'not a *word* had been preached, &c.' then "the falsehood of the same will be clear to our eyes." —Excellent!—Where is the author upon whom I will not sow on a Sophism—a blasphemy—if I am allowed to thrust upon him other words instead of his own? Other? merely other words? If the candid—the Christian and Reverend gentleman had let it rest there! But he thrusts upon me, instead of my words, which have some sense if not a true

* Lessing plays on the German "handgreiflich," used by Goeze.

one, words which have absolutely no sense. I say: the Christian Religion existed before any part of the Christian Religion had been written. I am made to say: the Christian Religion existed, before the Christian Religion had been preached or revealed. That is, existed before it existed. Have I then escaped from Bedlam, that I should say or write any such thing?

The Reverend Gentleman hereupon proceeds to impute to me doubts which I never felt. And why? Is it that the readers of his pages may believe that I have these doubts?—Charming! Very becoming to his cloth!

Again the question is broached: "How can we "at present know the precepts and acts of Christ "and his Apostles?" answer is returned: "*Solely* "by the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles." Against this word "*solely*," I must again secure myself: and I add, the majority of Christians admit his "*solely*" as little as I do. Or are the Roman Catholics not Christians? am I no Christian if, in this, I side with them? Do I thus absolutely dispense with the whole Christian Religion?

And here the Heterodoxy of the Reverend Gentleman begins. How? the Christian Religion itself be lost, if the writings of Evangelists and Apostles were? What! Has no sure system been drawn from these writings which might be preserved in others? Is he no Christian who believes the system, when so derived? Does no sick man

recover, but he, who swallows medicine together with box?

Review my whole object in the passage, so offensive to the Reverend Gentleman. I would reduce to their true insignificance objections against the less important parts of the Bible. And it is with this object that I say, he, whose heart is more Christian than his head, should not care a jot for these cavils; because he feels what others are content to think; because he, if things came to the worst, could do without all the entire Bible. He, who is confident of victory, leaves the forts behind and captures the country. But the Theologian is the coward soldier, who, by knocking his head against every frontier fortress, scarce gains a sight of the country at all.

A story to the point!—

At the commencement of the last century, a deprived Lutheran Preacher of the Palatinate, wished to betake himself, together with his family, children of both sexes—to one of the Colonies of British America. The ship in which he was crossing over was wrecked on one of the small, uninhabited Bermuda Isles; and almost all the ship's company, with the exception of the Preacher's family, were drowned. The Preacher found this island so pleasant, so healthy, so rich in all, which contributes to the support of life, that he readily made up his mind to close the days of his pilgrimage there.

The storm had driven a small chest on the shore, in which there was found, with all sorts of things for his children, a Lutheran Catechism also. This Catechism, in the complete want of all other books, naturally enough, became a very valuable treasure. He continued to instruct his children from it, till he died. The children again instructed their children from it; and died. Two years ago an English ship with a Hessian army-chaplain on board, was driven on the same island. The army-chaplain,—I could cite his own letters—went on shore with some sailors to take in fresh water, and was not a little astonished, to find himself at once, in a quiet, smiling valley, among a naked, cheerful, small population, who spoke German; a German in which he thought he heard nothing, but phrases and turns borrowed from Luther's catechism.

This excited his curiosity, and lo! he found, this small population not only spoke with Luther, but also believed with Luther—believed as orthodoxly as ever did army-chaplain. A few trifles excepted. The Catechism had been naturally worn out in the century and a-half, and they had nothing more left of it, than the little boards of the binding. "In these little boards," said they, "is "contained all which we know."—"Has been con- "tained, my dears!" said the army-chaplain. "Is "contained,—contained still" said they. "We our- "selves indeed cannot read—hardly indeed know "what it means.—But our fathers have heard their

"fathers read therefrom, and these last knew the "man, who cut out the little boards. The man "was called Luther, and lived shortly after Christ."

Before I proceed with the story, Reverend Sir: were these good little folks Christians, or were they not? They had a lively faith that there is a Supreme Being; that they were poor sinful creatures; that this Supreme Being has taken measures, notwithstanding, to make them eternally happy, after this life, through another, equally exalted Being.—Reverend Sir, were these kind folks Christians, or were they not?

You must of necessity say they were not, for they had no Bible.—Merciful God! Unmerciful Priest!—No! I'll tell you no more of this dear, cheerful, happy, little party. Let us rather chat a moment longer upon a subject, concerning which, it is far more pardonable to have no correct ideas. The Reverend Gentleman wishes to prove, that, "my position, moreover, manifestly contradicts ex- "perience and history." But what he adduces on that head is so poor, so superficial, that at most he should allow himself such flourishes only in his sermons. Just listen: "From the ninth century," says he, "till the commencement of the fifteenth, "there was an interval, in which the writings of "the Evangelists and Apostles had well nigh been "lost. Who, save a few learned men knew the "Bible? It remained buried in the cloisters—in "Manuscripts and Translations—till the invention

"of printing." Why fewer copies of the New Testament, from the ninth to the fifteenth, than from the fifth to the ninth century? Why fewer from the fifth to the ninth, than from the first to the fifth? Just the reverse; the Codices of the New Testament multiplied with the course of time. They were most scarce in the first and second century,—so scarce that whole churches possessed but a single codex, held under lock and key by the Presbyters, and not to be read, without their special permission. Will he venture to prove the same, as to the period he quotes? I think, in my poor way, that in this period there were more copies of the Bible in Germany alone, than during the first two centuries, in the whole world; except perhaps of the original text of the Old Testament. Or would he give us to understand, that with the ninth century they began to shuffle the Bible out of the hands of the people? He must do so; for he goes on: "the great mass "heard nothing more of the Bible, than what the "Roman clergy told them, that is, only what did "not prejudice the clerical interest. How stood "the Christian Religion at that time with the mass? "Was it more than a Heathenism with slight "changes?" All this took place, in truth, before the ninth century. Before that time therefore, Religion, if it could subsist only by the immediate use of the Bible, must have become corrupt. *Cui assentiunt*, I may add from Irenæus, *multæ gentes*.

barbarorum, eorum qui in Christum credunt, sine charta et atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem. Lastly, if Religion declined solely through lack of Scripture, why did it not recover when printing made copies abundant. But has the Romish church given up one of her old dogmas in consequence? Are there no *Conyers Middletons** who still regard her as a Heathenism very slightly changed? I am certain the Reverend Gentleman himself is of this edifying opinion.—But the Reformation?—this we owe at least to the full use of the Bible?—Even this may be doubted. It was not so much that men *began* to use their Bibles,—as that they *ceased* to regard Tradition. Meanwhile this unrestricted use of the Bible has been the cause of Socinianism, quite as much as of the Reformation.

Thus, at least, I think,—caring little for the Reverend Gentleman's wonder,—not even wondering at it! May heaven long preserve us in the same relation,—he wondering, and I not!

IX. (9).

RELIGION IS NOT TRUE, BECAUSE THE EVANGELISTS AND APOSTLES TAUGHT IT: BUT THEY TAUGHT IT BECAUSE IT IS TRUE.

Every well discerned distinction may be brought to an Antithesis by one who is tolerably master

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* See his "A letter from Rome, showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism," 1729.

of his own language. But Antithesis rests not always on such clear discernment;—our friends the poets often indulge in the summer lightning of wit: and fancy it the sharp and shattering flash of keen clear-sightedness. The name Antithesis, therefore, has grown somewhat suspicious. This is 'grist to 'the mill' with gentlemen, who feel a kind of natural antipathy to all clear and keen intellect,—specially if not dressed in their usual language. "Antithesis! Antithesis!" they cry. And they have refuted everything.

"This Antithesis too proves nothing!" says the oracular Reverend Gentlemen: "For if the Evan-"gelists and Apostles are men, who spake and "wrote, as moved by the Holy Ghost: then the "Christian Religion is true, because the Evangelists "and Apostles, or more properly, God himself has "taught it. The second position stands there quite "idly." Well then! I must heap up the measure of my sins, and prop one Antithesis by another. Even what God teaches is not true, because God is pleased to teach it: but God teaches it, because it is true. Does the second position stand here also idly?—Yes: if we knew not how charming an idea these Gentlemen have about the Will of God! that God can will something, merely because he wills it. Even this might be said in a certain sense of God. I hardly know how words can express their nonsense.

X. (10).

THE SCRIPTURAL TRADITIONS MUST BE EXPLAINED FROM THE INTERNAL TRUTH OF RELIGION: AND NO SCRIPTURAL TRADITIONS CAN GIVE TO IT ANY INTERNAL TRUTH, IF IT HAVE NONE.

The first word the Reverend Gentleman applies to this is: "*Good!*" I was, of course, glad. However a "*But*" follows this "*Good*" and the oddest *But* in the world. No longer is aught "good," not even what was so called from his own mouth. Above, himself informed us, the internal truth of the Christian Religion rests on its harmony with the attributes of God; now, he no longer knows a word of this internal truth, but either merely places the Hermeneutic truth in its stead, or, at all events, declares it to be the only proof of the internal truth. As if this needed a proof! As if the internal truth ought not rather to be the proof of the Hermeneutic truth!

List! Oh list! I will reduce the pretended refutation on the part of the Reverend Gentleman, and my answer, to a sort of Dialogue, which might be called the Pulpit-Dialogue. Namely, I interrupt the Reverend Gentleman: but the Reverend Gentleman does not consider himself as interrupted. He goes on talking, without troubling himself, whether or not our words chime in. He is wound up, and must run down. Therefore,

A Dialogue and no Dialogue.

He. "Good; but the man who would explain "to me the Scriptural traditions from the internal "truth of Religion, must *first* convince me, that "he himself has a right well-grounded conception of "the internal truth of the same,—"

I. *First?* Why first? While he does the one he surely does the other also. While he explains to me the internal truth of a revealed sentence, (I say *explains*, not merely *wishes to explain:*) he surely sufficiently proves, that he himself has a right conception of this internal truth.

He. "—and that he does not form for himself "an image of it, which suits his own views."

I. If his views have no intrinsic goodness: then the Religious dogmas, which he wishes to impart to me, cannot have any intrinsic truth either. Intrinsic truth is no nose of wax,* which every rogue can make as prominent as he likes, according to the face which he wants.

He. "But whence will he obtain his knowledge "of the internal truth of the Christian Religion,—"

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* How the *letter* of the Bible may be made a nose of wax, Granville Sharp may show, in his "New proofs of Christ's Divinity, derived from "the uses of the Article in the Greek Testament." As if this Greek was highly finished, pure, and correct diction, instead of being a hybrid

"thing, one knows not what to call
Its generation's so equivocal:"—

made up of ungrammatical *patois*, — Hebraisms, — Syro-Chaldaisms, — Rabbinisms,—Persisms, —Latinisms, &c. Porson quizzed Sharp's letters, under the name of Gregory Blunt.

I. Whence obtain its internal truth? Why, out of itself. Indeed it is on that account that it is called *internal* truth; that truth, which stands in need of no external credentials.

He. "—except from the written traditions, or "from the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles,—"

I. What must we take from these? Internal truth, or our first historical knowledge of this truth? The former would be as strange, as if I should feel compelled to hold, as true, a geometrical theorem, not on account of its demonstration, but on account of its having a place in Euclid. That it has a place in Euclid, may be a well grounded prejudice in favor of its truth; as much as you like. But it is one thing, to believe the truth from prejudice, and another, to believe it on its own account. Practically, perhaps, both may lead to the same end, but is it, on that account, the same case?

Again, has the New Testament, through seventeen centuries, never diffused itself—never and nowhere flowed over into other writings, in its original purity and wholesomeness? Must all Christians draw from itself alone,—never use nearer, more accessible channels, into which it has overflowed? Surely this, this only is the question here.—If he may, why may not the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, without injury to him, become lost? Why not consider them as lost, when assailed with objections to passages, which alter not the essentials of Religion? If no complete, unerring system has,

or ever can be drawn from them, must every one see with his own eyes,—become his own teacher,—director of his own conscience,—out of the Bible? How I pity you, poor innocent souls, born in countries, whose language the Bible does not yet speak! And you, in every land, who want the first step to knowledge,—the power to read! Because baptized, you fancy yourselves Christians. Unfortunates! Learn hence: that *the power to read* is as needful to salvation, as *baptism.*

He. "—in due connection with the writings of "the Old Testament."

I. And that too! I fear, ye dear, pious illiterates, you must also learn Hebrew, if ye wish to be certain of your salvation.

He. "Here I allow nothing to his reason, though "I always presuppose, that the doctrines of the "Religion, preached to me as the Christian, must "never contradict an universal and incontestable "principle of reason."

I. Reverend Sir! Reverend Sir!—Then the whole *reasonableness* of the Christian Religion consists in this, that it is not *unreasonable?*—And you feel no shame, in your theological heart, to write like this! If you write so, I suppose you preach so. And do they, in Hamburg, allow you to preach this?

He. "We therefore only then recognise the truth "of the Christian Religion, when our notions of the "same are just those, which the written traditions, "contained in Holy Writ, *ought* to produce there-"from, in our souls."

I. *Ought!* but what notions ought they to produce?—Can you deny it, Reverend Sir, can you conceal it from yourself, that few passages, in the whole New Testament, produce in all men the same notions? That the greater part produce different notions in different men? Which then are the right ones, that ought to be produced? Who shall decide this? The Hermeneutic? Every one has his own Hermeneutic. Which is the true? are they all true? or is not one true? And this thing, this doubtful, miserable thing is to be the test of the internal truth! What then should be *its** test?

He. "To be sure, the written traditions of the "Christian Religion can give no internal truth, if "it have none."

I. Methinks, Reverend Sir, that you were not quite so liberal before, when it seemed proof enough, for the internal truth of a Dogma, that it stood written there. I hope you are not so liberal because at bottom careless,—because a revealed truth, which allows not food for thought, is in your eyes as dear as one that does?

He. "But that indeed it ought not to do."

I. Charming, it ought not to do, what it cannot do!—But if the written traditions of the Christian Religion neither can, nor ought to give internal truth: then indeed it is not from it, that the Christian Religion has its internal truth. But if it has its

* The test of the Hermeneutic.—Transl.

internal truth, not from the written tradition: then it depends not on it. But if it depend not on it, it can subsist without it. That is all I want.

He. "Its object therefore is this, to reveal and prove the "internal truth of the same."

I. If "*reveal*" means *first make known;* I have proved, Scripture did not first make known to *the world* the internal truth of the Christian Religion. Here I add, it now does so still less. We all come to it, already provided with the ground-work of religion.—And "*to prove*"! If "prove" mean, give a written voucher, in which the words of the position to be proved are contained; the Reverend Gentleman has himself admitted, such a voucher cannot and ought not afford aid to the internal truth. But if "prove" mean, what it properly means:—show the connection of one truth with other and undoubted truths; then surely every other book can do this, just as well as the Scripture, particularly after Scripture has done it before. Again then we see not, why the Christian Religion could not now subsist, without the Scripture.

He. "Consequently they are idle words, when "one wishes *to oppose* to each other, the internal "truth of the Christian Religion, and the traditions, "or more plainly, the Holy Scripture, as two different "things,—"

I. Oppose? Who wishes to oppose these to one another? I? I only assert, they can be now independent of each other. Are then two different

things, in every case opposed to one another? He who maintains this, may indeed be said to utter idle words; I make no such assertion. I would not take from the Theologian the scripture, upon which he so well exhibits his skill. I know how much the learned study of scripture has aided all other branches of knowledge and science; I am sensible, into what barbarism we might soon sink, if it were clean banished from the world. But the Theologian must not press, upon us Christians, his learned Bible-Studies as Religion. He must not cry out, "unchristian!" because an honest layman is satisfied with his system,—drawn from the Bible,— and believes it true, not so much on that account: as that he sees it to be more suitable to God, and more salutary to man, than all other systems of Religion; because he *feels*, that this Christian system gives him peace.

He. "— just as useless, as if one were to say: "one must explain the laws of a lawgiver by his "internal justice. Quite the reverse; the internal "justice of a lawgiver, must be perceived and de- "termined by his law."

I. The Reverend Gentleman is peculiarly unfortunate in all his instances and elucidations. Quite the reverse, say I, in my turn. And if Truth be not a weather-cock, she will, I trust, set the matter at rest, at my word of command. What? not explain the laws of a lawgiver by his internal justice? If the letter of the law hit one, not possibly in-

tended by the lawgiver,—if according to the letter, from unforeseen circumstances, punishment fall, where reward is merited,—will not the just judge rightly abandon the letter, and appeal to the lawgiver's internal justice? What? perceive and explain the internal justice of a lawgiver from his laws? Solon, surely, was a law-giver. Solon would have demanded credit for a more pure and perfect justice, than was perceptible from his laws. When asked, whether he had given his citizens the best laws: what did he answer? Ὅτι, οὐ τους καθαπαξ καλλιστους, ἀλλ' ὡν ἐδυναντο τους καλλιστους. "Ab-
"solutely the best,—certainly not: but still the best
"which they were capable of receiving."—So:—

However, I am heartily tired of talking, any longer, with a deaf man. Otherwise I might, not unsuitably, give an application of Solon's words, highly offensive to the Reverend Gentleman, if haply ignorant, that one of the Fathers has set the example. But the poor Fathers generally,—what a rap on the knuckles would they receive, from our Lutheran Divines, if they wrote now! This Father scruples not to admit a two-fold religion; one for the common man, another, concealed beneath the first, for the more subtle and learned head. I am far from going that length. With me the Christian Religion remains one and the same, but I make Religion distinct from its History. As I hold the historical knowledge not indispensable, I regard objections against that part as unimportant, and deny weak

parts of the Bible, to be weak points in Religion. I would not boast to the common people, these objections have been met long ago. I despise the short-sighted Bible-interpreter, who piles up possibilities upon possibilities, to confirm the possibility, these weak parts may be no weak parts,—who would stop a small breach made by the enemy, by opening a much larger one in another place.

And can I be said, in all this, to have sinned against the Christian Religion? because I said: 'What matter the hypotheses and explanations and 'proofs of the Theologian to the Christian? Chris- 'tianity exists,—he *feels* it true,—he *feels* himself 'blessed. When the paralytic experiences the be- 'nefit of the electric spark: what matter to him 'whether Nollet, or Franklin, or neither is right?'

The Reverend Gentleman takes good care to omit all this. Yet it was written expressly for that *feeling* Christian, upon whom he so cantingly enlarges. It was meant that he might confidently throw himself into this fortress, when no longer able to keep the field with more courageous Theologians. That the Theologians—aye of every sect, neither do, nor need quit the field so soon; who does not know that? I admitted, the Theologian finds answers enough; I attempted some myself: if not good for much,—very possible,—let who can do better! This is my only wish. It was on this account solely, I published the Fragments. Or is it thought, because I wished and hoped for perfectly

satisfactory answers, I rather ought to have reserved my last resource, till I found such answers wanting? Or did I wish, through this last resource, to declare all answers superfluous? No; this resource was for the simple Christian, and not for the Theologian,—it was at least for that Theologian only, who, by his higher wisdom, was still a simple Christian.

That this last resource, which I deem the most impregnable bulwark of Christianity, is called by the Reverend Gentleman a shield of straw—causes me, for his sake, much grief! I fear, in his theologic wars, he has been not uninfected by the Heterodoxy of his adversary, more than he would willingly appear, in a Hamburg pulpit,—more than he has yet perceived himself. For he thus denies all inward feeling of Christianity. And if he has not yet shrieked from the pulpit: "Feeling! what "feeling? Feeling is a shield of straw! Our "Hermeneutic,—our symbolic books, these, these "are the all-protecting, impenetrable, adamantine "Shield of the Faith?"—it only arises, probably, from this, that in the symbolic books themselves, this shield of straw is still esteemed of value. It matters little to him were it all straw, for we find many shields of straw in those books. But it is so narrow, suited to shelter each man singly, with religion in his heart;—of what use then to a Pastor, who would magnify his own office and shelter at once his Bible,—and his whole dearly beloved flock?

Hear in his own words,—they well deserve it,—how he advises his worthy Colleagues to be open runaways, rather than avail themselves of this shield: "I should greatly pity," says he, with tremulous voice, "the Christian, who is also a Theologue, if "for lack of other grounds, he find a dire necessity "to oppose this straw-plaited shield to the fiery "darts, which are to be found in the Fragments."—This should I do likewise,—to a certain extent; at all events, I should shrug my shoulders at one, who so badly understands his trade. But did I speak of "a Christian, who is also a Theologue?" Ought every Christian,—must he be a Theologian also? I ever find the best Christians among those, who know least Theology. What if they come not within range of the fiery darts,—the shield of straw may, at least, be of use against blows!—But the Reverend Gentleman is decided: "I would rather "advise him to take to flight."—If he think he must, at least, retain the Theologian to his sect, a happy journey to him! Enough if those stand to their colors, who are *only* Christians.—"For apply "these positions of the Editor, and you give up "the Bible, to save Religion: but what Religion?"—What? The same from which the Bible rose. The same, which in later times, when Religion was corrupted by the priest, was again drawn therefrom. Or is that not really the Christian Religion, which has been drawn from the Bible? "Cer-"tainly not," the Reverend Gentleman decides,

"not the Christian Religion, which stands and falls "with the Bible." I am sorry for that,—the Bible stand and fall! What with its Divine Inspiration? "By all means," he must say, "without Bible, "no Christianity; without plenary inspiration, no "Bible."

Let me here fall back on another writer. The words "stand and fall" naturally remind me of the passage.*

The question, whether the books of the New Testament are inspired by God, is not so important to the Christian Religion, as whether they are genuine. *Religion does not absolutely stand or fall, with the question of inspiration.* Suppose God had not inspired, but left Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul to themselves, to write what they knew; provided the Scriptures were ancient, genuine, and trustworthy, the Christian Religion would still remain the true one. The miracles, by which it is confirmed, would prove its truth just as well, though the witnesses of the same were un-inspired, human witnesses. The miracles being true, the discourses of Christ, so confirmed, become the infallible word of God. It were quite possible to deny the inspiration of the New Testament, and yet believe the Christian Religion with all one's heart.

How might this passage shelter me! But I need it not. Nor would I imitate the base mendicant, who sets an angry dog upon a brother, to avoid being bitten himself. For, if I know the Reverend Mr. Goeze, he too well understands his own interest, not to keep fast his hold upon me; rather than fly afresh at a *Michaelis.*

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* Michaelis, in s. Einleitung in die Schriften des N. T. S. 73. n.a.

LETTER V.

ANTI-GOEZE

i.e. compulsory contributions to the "Voluntary Contributions" of the Rev. Mr. Goeze.

THE FIRST.

(please God it be the last!)

I.

Multa sunt sic digna revinci, ne gravitate adorentur.

TERTULLIANUS.

1778.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

Pray do not go on so thoughtlessly blustering.—It is not a pleasant task to me, that I must so soon follow up my defiance. But otherwise you might think I am not in earnest.—See then, what plans I herewith sketch out, for my warfare with you. You may infer also what the tone will be, from the Lemma of Tertullian, and the remaining words which follow it. *Out-bawl* me you can every eighth day: you know, *where*. *Outwrite* me you certainly shall not.

God knows, I have no objection, that you, and all School-rectors in Lower Saxony, take the field against my Anonymous. I rather rejoice; for it was

to this end, I published him, that right many might test,—might refute him. I also hope, he will in good time come into proper hands, which does not seem the case, as yet. Thus I think by making him known, I do more service to the Christian cause, than you, by all your Religious Tracts and Newspapers.

What, am I to be the enemy of the Christian Religion, because I think it more proof than you do? Because I notify, to the medical officer, the pestilence, that walketh in darkness, am I to be the man, who brought the plague into the land? For in a word, Reverend Sir,—you are vastly mistaken, if you think the Anonymous would have remained unknown, but for my help. Know then, the book exists entire, in many MS. copies,—though fragments of the first essay only, are in the library. This Library, forsooth, you say, would have been made more useful to the world, if I had collated for you, word for word, all the old German Bibles found therein.*

Meanwhile, do you not yourself assure us, these *abominable* Fragments have already given rise to works, whose utility far transcends any mischief, to be apprehended from the publication?

And have I,—*the causa sine qua non* of these excellent works,—to apprehend, on this account, the

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* Goeze had, in vain, requested Lessing to perform for him this tedious task.—TRANSL.

sentence of Convocation ?* I rather promise myself a reward from this tribunal, when no longer exclusively occupied in curbing wrong, and punishing wicked actions,—when more enlightened times give it leisure, to seek out hidden virtue, and reward good actions.

Charming, excellent, quite in Luther's spirit!—to urge on Convocation to a step, which if taken two hundred and fifty years ago, had deprived us of all reformation! What rights had Luther, which every Doctor of Theology does not still possess? If no Doctor of Theology may now translate the Bible anew,—as he can answer before God and his conscience,—then had Luther no right. I add: still less right had Luther. He acted arbitrarily against the Church Dogma: that it were better the Bible were not read by the commonalty, in their own language.

The true Lutheran does not wish to be defended by Luther's writings, but by Luther's spirit; and Luther's spirit absolutely demands, that no man

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* Convocation! when will that Nursing-Mother of Heresy and Schism, in our own land, die a natural death? Lord Clarendon himself tells us:*

"Clergymen understand the least, and take the worst measure of human affairs, of "all mankind, that can write and read."

True, fortunately for England, it is now practically effete; it is now the conference of Lords Doodle and Noodle.

DOODLE. Noodle, I make my petition to the king.

NOODLE. Doodle, do so.

(Convocation prorogued. *Exeunt omnes.*)

* *Life, Vol.* I, *p.* 66. *Oxford*, 1759.

be prevented from advancing in the knowledge of the truth, according to his own judgement. But *all* are prevented, if *one* be prohibited from imparting to others his own advance. Without individual contributions, no general advance is possible.

Reverend Sir, if you could bring matters to that point, that our Clergymen should become our Popes;—have power to prescribe, where we must stop in investigating Scripture;—prevent our imparting the result: then would I be the first, to pass from these petty Popes to the Pope of Rome. We hope many resolutely think thus, though they speak not openly. Thus to scare the Protestant back into the bosom of the Romish Church, stamps you as bad a Politician, as you are Theologian.—

One of the excellent works,* which, without me, would have remained in the barren loins of nonentity, is Mr. Mascho's "*Defence of the Christian Religion:*" or, as I should rather say, the "*Defence of Mr. Mascho's Christian Religion.*" For, in truth, the "Defence" is not so much his own, as is the Religion which he defends. What! could you have read this,—read the work through,—when, for the 71st time this year, you sounded a blast upon your horn?—Indeed?

Then the Public cannot learn too soon, what

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* Answers to the "*Fragments.*"—TRANSL.

various weights and measures Goeze and Co. have in Hamburg!

I am sorry so to blame this, otherwise respectable, firm. But why not just and full weight, when dealing with old friends? Why more careful to *make* friends, than to retain them?

Poor Mascho, if you let the envious man, who would guide all actions in his own channels, dispatch me first, he is sure to give you a trimming too. At present, he affects not to see to which side you incline. Help is what he wants: *Tros Rutulusve fuat.*—He would add to the number of his party, in the Periodicals. But wait!

Is it seemly to address in a letter, a party different from him, to whom it is directed. I turn to you again, Reverend Sir, and once more ask you: have you really read Mr. Mascho's "Defence," which you so much praise?

Really?—Then what I accuse you of is proved. You have various weights and measures,—"*an abomination to the Lord!*" Me, you cheat with one; Mr. Mascho, you serve with another. That, against which you warn others in me, you commend in him. Drugs which, at my prescription, are dangerous and deadly; at his *recipe*, you sell in equal or larger dose, as quite harmless and wholesome.

Or, to express the thing, Reverend Sir, in your own ingenious metaphor of the "*shield of straw:*" Mr. Mascho fights under the same shield of straw, whereby you made me so ridiculous and suspicious

to the world. How does this shield, on my arm worse than none, become on his a weapon so passing fair?

To wit, does not Mr. Mascho assert: 'the Bible '*is* not a Revelation, but *contains* one'?

Does not Mr. Mascho also distinguish 'the '*Letter* from the *Spirit* of the Bible'?

Does not Mr. Mascho teach, '*Religion* existed, before *the Bible*'?

And are not these the three positions, on which the Reverend Mr. Goeze entered the lists with me?

You cannot say, Reverend Sir, you have not found these positions in him. They not only stand there in plain words: but all and everything, which Mr. Mascho says, refers to, and is grounded on them.

[The further examination of Mr. Mascho's book, continued to the end of the letter, being quite uninteresting to the English reader, has been omitted.]

LETTER VI.

Bella geri placeat nullos habitura triumphos!
LUC.

1778.

MY VERY REVEREND SIR,

I received your "*Something anticipating*"* against my—not your first lie—"*indirect and direct* "*hostile attacks against our most holy Religion, &c.,*" late on Easter Eve,—just in time, to taste your excellent new wine.† This I mean to relish during the Festival! thought I. And I have relished it. God grant, the next run of the vat relish, and agree with me as well!

But what is this? The Right Reverend Gentleman rebukes me in his "*Something anticipating*" (Etwas Vorläufigen), which I, as more voluble, call the *anticipating something* (Vorläufige Etwas), with vast earnestness and emphasis, for my *equivoques*‡

* Etwas Vorläufiges.

† Lessing here plays on the words *Vorläufig* (anticipating) and *Vorlauf* (new wine).—TRANS.

‡ The Right Reverend Gentleman writes *Equivocen*, and that more than once. It is neither a slip of the pen nor a misprint; but it was his pleasure to use this jocose orthography—and make a nice little pun! *Æquivocum, quasi dicas,* EQUI VOCEM. For indeed what does *äquivoker*

and puns; and yet I am again at this unseemly work,—equivocating and punning with the words *Vorläufig* and *Vorlauf;* without explaining whether I mean by *Vorlauf* that which runs from the wine-press, or the still.

But pray forgive a weakness, Right Reverend Sir, which is become with me a second nature. Every man has his own peculiar style, just as he has his own peculiar nose; and it is neither courteous nor Christianly, to laugh at an honest man, on account of his nose, however odd it may be. How can I help it that I have no other style? That it is not the effect of elaborate study, I am quite sure; for it plays the most extraordinary pranks, and most wantonly sports, at the very time, I have most sought to master the subject by cool reflection, and mature consideration.

It matters little how we write; but much, how we think. Surely you do not hold, that under words flowery, and rich in images, there must needs lie a sense shuffling and shifty? That, to think rightly and definitely, one must use the plainest,—commonest,—flattest expressions. That it injures the truth, when we give to the cold Symbolic ideas, a little of the warmth and life of Natural Signs?

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mean but the neighing of a horse? not to Jerome Cardan, but to folks less knowing in neighings than Cardan.—Or would the Right Reverend Gentleman be still more jocose, and allude to a word of Luther's, in his "Hanswurst von Wolfenbüttel," (Jack-pudding from Wolfenbüttel.) The Librarian at Wolfenbüttel recalled this book to his mind, the book recalled the word; I am truly glad to be on the track of his wit. This I may call an imitation of Luther.—G. E. Lessing.

How ridiculous, to ascribe the depth of a wound, not to the *sharp*, but to the *brightly polished* sword!—to ascribe the advantage, truth gives our adversary, to his dazzling style! I know of no dazzling style, which does not borrow its brightness, more or less, from the truth. Truth alone gives genuine brightness;—even under buffoonery and banter, it must lie at least as a foil.

So let us speak of truth, and not of style.—My style I give up to the mercy of all the world: and to speak frankly, the theatre may have spoiled it a little. I know the principal fault right well, by which it may be distinguished from so many others; and too marked a distinction is a fault. But like Ovid,—when the critics would cleanse him of every fault,—I claim indulgence here. For it is not a fault,—it is original sin. To wit: it tarries over its metaphors, often spins them into similes, and indeed, now and then, is too apt to paint in allegory,—often entangled thereby in farfetched terms of comparison, which might easily be transformed. This fault my dramatic works may have helped to strengthen. Our attention to dialogue accustoms us, to have a sharp eye on every figurative expression; because it is certain, that in the real intercourse of life, the course of which is seldom regulated by the reason, and almost always by the fancy, most passages are drawn from the metaphors, which the one or the other employs. It is this peculiarity,—properly observed in the imitation,—which gives to the dialogue

flexibility, and truthfulness. But how long and accurately, oftentimes, must a metaphor be examined, before that stream is discovered in it, which can best carry us on! and so it is natural, the theatre should not produce the best prose writers. If Cicero had been a better dialogue-writer, he would probably be less admirable, in his unbroken and continuous writings. Here, the direction of the thoughts remains the same;—in the dialogue, it changes every moment: for the settled equal step of the former, the latter often demands a spring or a jump; and seldom is the high jumper, the best dancer.

That, Right Reverend Sir, is my style,—not my logic.—But, say you, my logic, like my style, must be theatrical. No; good logic, however applied, is always the same; nay, the mode of applying it is everywhere the same. He who exhibits logic in a comedy, would betray no want of it in a sermon. Just as he, whose logic fails in a sermon, could never, through this lack of logic, compose even a tolerable comedy,—though a man of the most inexhaustible humour under the sun. Do you think that Père Abraham would have composed good comedies? Certainly not, his sermons are far too wretched. But who hesitates to believe, that Molière and Shakespeare would have composed and delivered excellent sermons, if they, instead of the theatres, had chosen to mount the pulpit?

When you, Right Reverend Sir, persecuted the good *Schlosser*, in so edifying a manner, on account of

his comedies, a double question arose. The first: has a preacher any right to compose comedies? To which I replied: "why not? *if he can.*" The second: has the author of comedies any right to compose sermons? To which my reply was; "why not? *if he* "*likes.*"

But to what purpose, all this tattle? What have I to do, now, with the paltry matters of style and theatre: now, when so terrible a sentence is hanging over me?—There he stands, my pitiless accuser, and neighs forth* blood and condemnation, and I, simple ninny, stand by his side and quietly brush the flue from his clothes.—

I must, I must take fire,—or my calmness and coolness itself, will make me deserving of reproach.

What, Right Reverend Sir, have you the effrontery to charge me, with direct or indirect hostile attacks upon the Christian Religion? What hinders me from publishing to the world, that all the heterodoxy, which you now condemn in me, I have before heard and learnt, from your own mouth. What hinders me? One untruth would be worth the other. This alone hinders me: I have not your effrontery. I do not venture to say, what I cannot prove: and you—you do every day, what you should do, only one day in the week. You chatter, calumniate, and storm: the pulpit may provide proof and evidence.

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* Wiehert, refers to "the voice of a horse," vid. note page 65.

And this libel of Goeze, with so infamous a title,—what does it contain? It contains nothing, but the wretched criticisms, which already are, or deserve to be, in the "*Voluntary Contributions*". But yes; it also contains a thrice warmed up sop, which I have given to the cat long ago. And still must the Reverend Gentleman's dear children in Christ have this sop, already licked and besnuffled, thrust into their mouth.

Is it conceivable, that any honest man of learning, —I will not say a Theologian,—can, under such a title, again send into the world refuted charges, without taking the least notice of their refutation?— "Does he know nothing then of this refutation?"— O yes! He knows very well, it exists; he has heard of it: but he has not yet read it, and we shall see, after the Holidays, whether he finds it necessary to reply to it. And meanwhile, Right Reverend Sir, have you the barbarity to repeat your accusations? to repeat them in a more embittered tone? And are you omniscient? are you infallible? —And can there be absolutely nothing in my refutation, which might place me in a less unfavourable light? nothing which might move you, at least partially, to withdraw your impeachment? And are you so sure, so perfectly sure, that you will, henceforth and for ever, view the matter, as you once viewed it? In this one manœuvre, Reverend Sir, I clearly see you, as you are. You have not time, before the Holidays, to hear the

defence of the accused. You repeat the indictment, and affix his name to the gallows without hesitation. After the holidays, you will have time to see, whether, in consequence of his defence, his name should be removed, or not!

Is it possible to preserve the least regard for such a man?—For a third party: perhaps it might. But not for him, at whose head these stones are aimed. Should he not, in his turn, be allowed to employ all sorts of weapons against such a man? What weapons can be more assassin-like, than his conduct? Nevertheless, do not fear, Reverend Sir, that I should overstep the bounds of retaliation. I shall be far from even approaching them, however scornfully, disdainfully, recklessly I may write. You may find in me an *unmannerly*, but certainly not an *immoral* opponent.

This distinction between *unmannerly* and *immoral*, which is very important, though both words, according to their derivation, should mean precisely the same, shall ever remain between us. Only I will endeavour to set your *immoral* way of disputing in the strongest light, even though it could only be accomplished in the most *unmannerly* way.

Now my paper is full: and you shall not receive from me more than one sheet at a time. I am permitted, to let fall upon your bare head, drop by drop, the bucket of dirty water, in which you would drown me.

LETTER VII.

Avolent quantum volent paleæ levis fidei quocunque afflatu tentationum, eo purior massa frumenti in horrea domini reponetur.

TERTULLI.

1778.

WELL:—"my direct and indirect hostile attacks "upon the Christian Religion."

So then! Mr. Goeze regards *one* passage, at least, in the New Testament as *not* inspired, not divine; but as a merely good human precept, to which he may make exceptions at pleasure. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

No truly! He *himself* does not condemn. He merely repeats the condemnation, which the Holy Ghost has pronounced. He has only the honour and the pleasure of announcing their condemnation to Messrs. *Basedow*, *Teller*, *Semler*, *Bahrdt*, the Authors of the *Allgemeine Bibliothek*, and my unworthy self. For there it stands! *He that believeth not shall be damned!*—Believeth not him; believeth not precisely the same, as he believes,—*shall be damned!*

And why should he not, in spite of his persisting in judging, which is but the innocent echo of the

thunder, hope to attain to bliss? Indeed, I imagine, it is *through* this very judging, he hopes to attain to it. What wonder? did not the pious harlot hope to be saved through child-bearing? The words, on which she built, also stand there.

And in how delicate, gentle, and insinuating a way, does he, every now and then, set about this ticklish business! Quite in the tone and after the manner of a certain *Monsieur Loyal*, in a certain Comedy, which, before certain people, one does not willingly name. He is anxious about my reputation! —but what signifies this bubble?—he is so anxious about my salvation! He trembles so compassionately for me, at the hour of death! Sometimes he is quite polite to me,—so that I may not feel it too painful, when he thrusts me out of my father's house.

Ce Monsieur Loyal porte un air bien deloyal.

But what is all this to the purpose? Let us take up the charges themselves.—Enough, that my heart condemns me not, and that I, with all cheerfulness before God, both dare, and will tear the mask from the face of every intolerant hypocrite, who thus encounters me,—even though the whole skin remain hanging to it!

First then of my indirect attacks.—By these the Reverend Gentleman understands: "the printing "of the Fragments under my auspices, and the "defence of the author, undertaken by me."

The first is notorious: and I can as little deny it, as I should be desirous to do so, if I could. *The*

second I will not allow to be said, or if possible, even to be thought of me. At least not in the sense, which the Reverend Gentleman attaches to it. I had the Fragments printed: and I would still have them printed if all the Goezes in the world condemned me, on that account, to the nethermost hell. The grounds upon which I thought I could do it with a good conscience, I have already and in different ways adduced. But Mr. Goeze will not allow, that these grounds are of the least avail, until I convince him, that they would justify me, "if I were to have Fragments "printed, in which the prerogatives of the noble "House I serve, the honour and innocence of its "late great and irreproachable Minister, and even "of the reigning Lord, were so attacked, as the "truth of the Christian Religion, the honour and "innocence of the Holy Apostles, and even of our "eternal King, really are in the aforesaid Frag-"ments." How childish! how cunning, and how malicious!—Do let us, Reverend Sir, before all things, first adjust the matter on both sides. You have forgotten to place a small trifle in the other scale: and you are well aware, in equilibrio every trifle gives the turn.

This once set right, I hope you will allow the adducible, credible testimony of my Superiors full weight. For instance; only admit, that such historical and political Fragments, as these, through the printing of which you would willingly lead me

on to slippery ground, were of such a nature, that their groundlessness were not only clearly and distinctly apparent, but that they also gave unexpected opportunity and material, of still exalting and strengthening, from several sides, the honour and the prerogatives of the aforesaid House: what then would be your doubt, as to whether I should dare to have such Fragments printed? on what is it grounded? On the supposition, that it may not prove so with regard to that honour and those prerogatives? On the supposition, that one should not undermine a tottering foundation, even for the purpose of strengthening it?—O, Reverend Sir, the most illustrious House of my Lord is greatly indebted to you for this flattery, for this anxious care!—For which I feel confident I shall be able, under any circumstances, to adduce credible testimony from my Superiors.

Or must I not admit, with regard to the truth of the Religion, which I profess, what I do, in the case of the prerogatives of the House, I serve? Must I not conclude that all objections to the one, may at least be as easily answered, as those made to the other? Must I not expect, that here also new objections will give occasion to new discussions, and more acute doubts, to more acute solutions?

"Certainly!" cries the Reverend Gentleman, "certainly! Religion, regarded as the substance "of the truths, revealed for our salvation, certainly "gains, the more honestly and acutely it is con-

"troverted. But that is only, *objective* Religion; "only objective! With *subjective* Religion it is "quite otherwise. This loses, most assuredly, by "such disputes infinitely more, than the other can "possibly gain by them! Consequently"— —

And what is this subjective Religion?—"Men's "frame of mind in regard to Religion, their faith, "their comfort, their trust in us, their teachers. "These, these are imperilled by every word, which "is written in German, against our most Holy "Religion."

Indeed! By heaven! a profound distinction, which I request him to leave in his School-terminology, if it is not to be hissed out, and used exactly in opposition to his own definition.

For, if it is true, that Religion *objectively* gains, and *subjectively* loses by all and every assault, made upon it: who will maintain, that it accordingly must be decided by the greater loss, or gain, whether such attacks are to be tolerated, or not? Yes, if loss and gain were here perfectly homogeneous things, which one need only subtract, the one from the other, in order to be decided by the result. But the gain is essential, and the loss is only accidental. The gain stretches over all time; the loss is limited to the moment, as long as the objections are unanswered. The gain is profitable to all good men, who love enlightenment and conviction; the loss affects only a few, who neither deserve to be taken into consideration, on account

of their understanding, or of their morals. The loss affects only the *paleas levis fidei*;* only the light Christian chaff, which at every puff of doubt is separated from the heavy grains, and flies off.

Of this, says Tertullian, let as much fly off, as may! *Avolent quantum volent!*—But not so our Church-teachers of the day. Not even a single husk of the Christian chaff must be lost! They would rather the grains themselves were not winnowed and turned over. Especially may every thing, which Tertullian says with so much acuteness of the heresies of his time, be fully applied to the writings of the unbelievers and free-thinkers of our day. What are these writings but heresies? Only that they are wanting in that, which makes the heresies proper so formidable. They aim directly at no splitting and rendering; they make no parties and factions.

The old heretics taught orally, more than in writing, and always began by endeavouring to procure followers, who could also give a political importance to the instructions they delivered. How much less mischievous the misbeliever, who now sends his crotchets only to the press, and lets them make as many partisans, as they can, without his further assistance.—The writings of free-thinkers are evidently then the less evil: and is the less evil to be more pernicious, than the great? If the

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* See the motto at the beginning of this letter.

greater evil must exist, "*in order that they, who* "*are righteous may become manifest*,"—*ut fides, habendo tentationem, haberet etiam probationem:* why should we not tolerate the less evil, which brings about this very good? O ye fools! who would gladly banish the hurricane out of nature, because it here buries a ship in the sands, and there dashes another in pieces on a rocky shore!—O ye hypocrites! for we know you. You care not about this unfortunate ship, for you would have insured it: you simply care about your own little garden; your own little comforts, little indulgencies. The wicked hurricane! there, it has torn the roof off your summer-house; there too, rudely shaken the loaded trees; there overturned your whole costly orangery, in seven earthen pots. What is it to you, how much good the hurricane otherwise promotes in Nature? Could it not be effected, without injuring your little garden? Why does it not blow past your hedge? or at least take his cheeks less full, as soon as he reaches your landmark? When Tertullian with regard to those, who in his day were so angry at the heresies, at whose progress they were so surprised, says: *vane et inconsiderate hoc ipso scandalizantur, quod tantum hæreses valeant:* what would he say of you, Reverend Sir, who raise such a noise about the paper foundation of a possible heresy? About the Fragments of one anonymous! Would he not likewise say: "Short-sighted "man,—*nihil valebunt, si illa tantum valere, non*

"*mireris?* Your very noise is in fault, if these "Fragments occasion more mischief, than they are "designed to do. The anonymous wished to ac- "quire no name by writing: else he would have "given his name. He wished to make no coterie: "or he would have done it in his life-time. In a "word: he who had these Fragments printed, has "much less responsibility, than you, who raise the "cry of Murder! against them. The former has "only put it in the power of many to read them: "you have been the occasion that many actually "have, and will read them."

Perhaps the Reverend Gentleman more willingly hears this rebuke from the mouth of a Father of the Church, than from mine!—

LETTER VIII.

Tonto sin saber Latin,*
Nunca es gran tonto.
FRANCIS DE ROXAS.

1778.

*"A fool is never a great fool, without knowledge of Latin."

[THE daily increasing contempt of the people for our Universities, and for ancient literature, deserves serious enquiry.

In part, the fault is with the people—in part with ourselves. The lovers of ancient literature, for its own sake, are always a scanty band, compared with those who demand at every turn: "*cui bono?*" For one votary of the Madonna of beauty,—for one such prophet "in girdle of camel's hair," there are four hundred and fifty, who would turn her into the housemaid of utility,—worshippers and priests of Mammon, that "eat at Jezebel's table."

This divorce of *letters* from, so called, *useful knowledge*, is suicidal, to end in barbarism; but it bids the scholar labor to adorn his doctrine, in the eyes of all men, by avoiding, more strictly than ever, all monkish pedantry. Away with baby

scholarship, and *nonsense* verses, it is not the golden age, but the iron age, we shall have to deal with. Later useful authors,—as Plutarch and Lucian, are no more to be proscribed as "unlicensed" Greek. Nay we must unite with the letters of Greece and Rome, those of England, France and Germany.

Public school distinctions, for

"Four and twenty blackbirds
"Baked in a pie"

in Greek Iambics, are like the tags and stripes of gold lace, which once marked the gentleman, but which have now descended to the May-day chimney-sweeper. The palmy days of Eton and of nonsense verse are past, and our "craft is in danger," if such nursery trifles usurp, with us, the place and name of manly scholarship.

The ancients were *men*, not *Scholars*. What are ye? and what do you seek from them? *Words;* whereas the silent temple of the mighty past claims a rational worship from all who enter,—not a pedlar display of its holy relics. Classical associations should suggest words of power and images of beauty, opening new regions of thought and scenes beyond the vulgar eye, binding to common life and nature, associations of history and poetic fable, that have charmed mankind for ever.

I know a Dominie, who gains his bread by the text of Demosthenes, so utterly devoid of all feeling with his author, that he still sighs for the days of the Stuarts, and prays that Italy may ever remain

under Austria and the Pope. This is not to "unsphere "the spirit" of the manly Greek and Roman, as England requires at our hands:

"Ye have the letters Cadmus gave,
"Think ye, he meant them for a slave?"

Milton was both Latinist and poet, but how scornfully does he stigmatize our system:*

An old error of Universities,—themes, verses, and orations,—matters wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit; with the ill habit they get of wretched barbarizing, against the Latin and Greek idiom, with their untutored Anglicisms, for want of well continued and judicious conversing, among pure authors digested, which they scarce taste; nor proceed to learn the substance of good things and arts in due order, which would bring the whole language quickly into their power, before poverty or youthful years hasten them, with the sway of friends, either to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly zealous Divinity.†

Another fatal symptom in our English Universities is *clerical domination.* If we imitate the Sorbonne, we shall inevitably share her fate. Our days are numbered.‡ Let Universities remember their high vocation, nor

"Born for the Universe, narrow the mind,
"And to party give up, what was meant for mankind."

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* Nondum juvenes declamationibus continebantur, cum Sophocles atque Euripides invenerunt verba, quibus deberent loqui. Nondum umbraticus doctor ingenia deleverat, cum Pindarus, novemque Lyrici, Homericis versibus canere sustinuerunt.—PETR. ARB.

† Letter to Hartlib.

‡ Jouffroy, in his admirable history, has shown how those Theological pedants came to be regarded, in the streets of Paris, as the owls and the bats, by birds at noonday.

Sir Roger de Coverley, would only go to the play, when it was "a good Church of England "Comedy." We have a clique of Puritans, lurking in Cambridge Halls, who would "make of sweet religion a rhapsody of words," and convert our gallant guild to a mere Church of England farce.—Forcing us to "make a gain of godliness." They cannot learn Hindustani forsooth but from "a good "Christian." They reject the first Botanist of the age, Sir E. Smith, as Unitarian; in short the heavens and the earth must not be studied, if not endorsed by the thirty-nine articles. It is the old Puritan redivivus,

"In the house of pure Emmanuel
"I had my education;
"In the sacred tongue of Canaan
"I took my recreation."

"He is given to prayer," says Dame Quickly, "he is something peevish that way: but nobody "but has his fault; but let that pass." Let us beware however, lest the parasitic ivy strangle the British Oak; lest every study be narrowed, by the "strong contagion of the priestly gown, that sells "e'en to its prayers and blessings." How soon, among such a race, does the beauty of poetry lose all her fresh and fairy looks! How does truth cease to show herself in her sublimest attitude!

"Th' unconquerable mind and Freedom's holy flame."

Let us never forget that, here at least, it is our birthright "to war in words with all, who war "with thought." Else we shall bare our Halls and

Colleges to a few north country sizars,—starvelings who seek one of the Priest's offices for a piece of bread. We shall drive away the noble and the great, if we have not more high and generous aims in our institutions. "Are you going down, Handel, "to take your degree?"—"No; but my bellows-blower is gone to take his."]

If the one, meantime, would be very suitable without the other.—Even if it were possible, "to "manage that the Christian Religion *objectively* "might draw all the advantage from the objections of the free-thinkers, without *subjectively* incurring the least injury."

That would certainly be the better. But how? by what means?—Here it is, that an idea is brought forth, which sounds pedantic enough to be, possibly, well grounded. Another person would only turn it into ridicule: I will test it. For anything pedantic is almost a recommendation to me.

It should be arranged, we are told, that the controversy should never be carried on in any way, but the language of the learned. "Write in Latin, Gentlemen! write in Latin"!—Yes! he who may have been industrious in the Classes! and knows Latin!

— No more, Mr. Sub-conrector: or *your* true design will be apparent. You would willingly procure, for your dear Latin, one recommendation more. "Learn Latin, youths; learn Latin! All objections "against Religion are written in Latin! Though you

"do not wish to write any yourselves, you must be "acquainted with those that are written."—And so youths will learn Latin, till their heads are turned. But I have said, that I will not only make the idea ridiculous, but put it to the test.—And so it should be my business, that this (paper) should effect that purpose. And that would not be my fault. Enough, I will set to work in earnest and in order. Well, *whoever desires to write against Religion, is not to be allowed to write in anything, but Latin; that the common man be not scandalised.*—

And in the countries where the common man pretty generally understands Latin, as in Poland, Hungary, &c.—there, I suppose, the objections against Religion must be written in Greek?—Naturally! What a pretty trick, for the pedagogues thus to make the Greek language also common in these countries! For it is understood, that the Latin books written against Religion, in other countries, will not come into these lands.

But to return to the ridiculous, which I would so willingly avoid!—" *What does it matter, if the "proposed plan does not answer in Poland and " Hungary? It does answer at any rate in Germany.*"—

Surely? does it answer?—Can a plan answer, which is neither practicable, fair, prudent, nor Christian?—This is what I will prove, as seriously as possible.

True, I must first suppose it practicable. I must allow, that a law might and could be passed upon

the subject. For a prohibition less than a law, would avail nothing. The head, or at least perpetual imprisonment on bread and water, and without pen and ink, must be the penalty, in the whole Roman Empire, if any one should write against sacred things otherwise than in Roman. Let the law rest on the name of the Holy Roman Empire, and shall it not be practicable?

Good; let it be practicable: but would it be fair?—Can a law indeed be fair, which would give as many incompetent persons a title to any thing, as it would exclude competent persons from it?—And who does not see, that this would happen in this case? Or is it the Latin itself, which guarantees the competency, to entertain and bring forward doubts about Religion? Is it ignorance of Latin itself, which denies this competency to all men without exception? Is it not possible for any man to be conscientious and thoughtful without Latin? Are there no blockheads, no fools with Latin? I will not insist on the notion of De Roxas, that "*Latin makes the real fool*;" but at any rate it does not make the real philosopher.—Add to this; of what sort of knowledge of Latin are we speaking? Of one which extends to the writing of Latin. Now if *Bacon*, who could write no Latin, had entertained doubts about Religion: must *Bacon*, on that account, have suppressed them? So any College School, which could scrape together a Latin programme, would have a privilege, which *Bacon* would not enjoy?

I do not find indeed, that *Bacon* thought like *Huarte*, who thought it direct evidence of a wrong-headed bungler, to believe, that he could express himself better in a foreign language than in his own. But *Bacon* might perhaps think: I cannot write Latin as I would; and as I can, I will not.—

If some persons knew, what Latin they write: less would write it. It would truly be the case, then, that they *must*. An *obligation*, which perhaps might be profitable to the language; but certainly not to the subject.

And if merely in this respect, where the greater good were sacrificed to the less, the unfair law would also be not prudent: would it be imprudent only in this respect? Would it not also be imprudent on this account, because it must necessarily awaken the suspicion of the common man as to the goodness of a subject, which they do not dare to treat openly? of the proof of which, the Latinists would communicate only so much, through their interpreter, as they thought serviceable?—Would it not also be imprudent, because it increases the evil, which it is intended to repair? The objections against Religion are to be written in Latin, in order that they may occasion mischief to a *less* number of people. To a less number? Yes to a *less* number in every country, in which the Latin were only in use among a certain class: but would it be so in all Europe? in the whole world? Scarcely. For are there not in Europe more people who know Latin, and are

yet incapable to meet and resist every ill impression of plausible doubt, than there are weak ones, who know not Latin, in each separate country? A soul is a soul to the devil: or if he makes any distinction, he would be the gainer. He would obtain, for instance, instead of the soul of a German ignoramus, who could only have been misled by German writings, the soul of a learned French or English man. He would gain a larded roast, instead of a dry one.

So the imprudent law would certainly have his, the devil's vote: even if it were not besides, *unchristian;* as may already be inferred, from its being unfair.—I understand by unchristian, what is at variance with the Spirit of Christianity,—with its end. Now the end of Christianity, as far as I, with the Reverend Mr. Goeze's permission, understand it, is not our salvation, let it come whence it may; but our *Salvation, through the medium of our enlightenment;* which enlightenment is not merely necessary as a condition, but as an essential element to our salvation; in which after all our entire salvation consists. How entirely opposed then to the Spirit of Christianity, rather to contribute nothing to the enlightenment of *so many*, than *possibly* to scandalise *a few!* These *few*, who never were, never will be Christians, who only dream away their unthinking life under the name of Christians; this *miserable* portion of Christians must be perpetually made to stop the hole, through which the better part wishes to pass to the light. Or if this most miserable

part is not the smallest, must it be spared on account of its multitude?—Then what sort of Christianity has been preached hitherto, that the greater body does not adhere, as it ought, to the true Christianity?—What if some of these nominal Christians were scandalised; what if some of them, on account of free-thinking works, written in their own language, should even declare, that they no longer would be,—what they never were; what of that? Tertullian asks, and I with him: *Nonne ab ipso Domino quidam discentium scandalizati diverterunt?* Whoever, before he begins to discuss, or especially to write, thinks himself obliged to enquire, whether he may not, perchance, by his discussions and writings, here scandalise a weak believer, or there harden an unbeliever, or again play into the hands of a knave, who is seeking fig-leaves:* let him at once renounce all idea of discussion, or writing. I would not wish intentionally to tread upon a worm; but if it is to be accounted a sin, if I accidentally tread on one; I know not how otherwise to help myself, than by not stirring at all; by not moving a limb out of its place; by ceasing to live. Every movement in Nature, developes and disturbs,—brings life and death; brings death to one creature, while it brings life to another: were it better there be no death and no motion? or rather, death and motion?

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* What Coleridge called a "*wrap-rascal.*"—TRANSL.

And is this the drift of this wish? that the enemies of Religion should never be allowed to employ any other than the Latin language; of this wish, which some so readily would make into a law! If this is the case already; and how, think ye, would it stand with all investigation of truth, if it really became a law?—Let us judge from the claws, which spiritual tyranny ventures already to display, in one of its most ferocious, but happily still chained tigers!

With this I aim at what the Reverend Gentleman says upon this point; and who ever does not smell, whither all the limitations and conditions tend, with and under which "it might still be "allowed," to make objections against Religion: he has a very bad cold.

"It may still be allowed," it is stated, "to "sensible and steady men, to make discreet objec- "tions against the Christian Religion, and even "against the Bible."—But on whom is the discrimination to depend? Who is a steady and sensible man? Is only he a *sensible* man, who has sufficient intelligence, to weigh the persecution, which he will bring upon himself by his freedom of thought? Is he alone a *steady* man, who willingly remains quietly seated, in the comfortable reclining chair, in which his office has *steadily* placed him, and therefore heartily wishes, that others too, if they cannot sit so comfortably, may nevertheless remain as quietly? Are only those *discreet* objec-

tions, which *discreetly* determine, not to allow the matter to come into life? which *discreetly* determine, only so far to declare themselves, as an answer may reasonably be expected? The latter must be. For the Reverend Gentleman continues: "Such "a proceeding is necessary, to keep the teacher in "breath."—O? only on that account? Then all controversy in Religion is to be only a School-exercise, only a sham-fight? As soon as the Moderator gives a hint to the Opponent; as soon as the Opponent observes, that the Respondent will have nothing to reply, and that Mr. Moderator is too hungry, to admit of his answering himself, with becoming calmness and decorum; must the Disputation cease? must Moderator and Opponent hurry off together in a friendly way to the Refreshment room?—But no, certainly not: for the Reverend Gentleman further adds: "and to guard "against such times of quiet, as those in which "Christianity, from the 9th to the 15th century, "had almost fallen to the ground."—Admirable! But does the Reverend Gentleman know, that even in these barbarous times more objections against the Christian Religion were made, than the Clergy were inclined to answer? Does he reflect that these times were so pernicious to the Christian Religion, not because no one had any doubt; but because no one dared venture to bring them to light? because they were times, such as the Reverend Gentleman wishes ours to become.

LETTER IX.

Cognitio veritatis omnia falsa, si modo proferantur, etiam quæ prius inaudita erant, et dijudicare et subvertere idonea est.

AUGUSTINUS AD DIOSCORUM.

1778.

O HAPPY times, when the clergy were all in all,—thought for us, and ate for us! How gladly would the Reverend Gentleman have brought you back in triumph! How delighted would he be, that the ruling powers of Germany should identify themselves with him for this salutary object! He preaches sweet and sour,—he places heaven and hell before you. If you will not hear;—you must feel. Wit and mother-tongue are the hotbeds, in which the seed of rebellion is so readily and so quickly matured. To-day a poet, to-morrow a regicide. Clement, Ravaillac, Damiens are not formed in the Confessional, but on Mount Parnassus.

I allow myself to be met once more on this *common place* of the Reverend Gentleman. Now, if not clear enough already, I will make it thoroughly clear, that Mr. Goeze does not at all admit, what he seems to admit, and that these are the identical

claws, which the tiger is so angry at being able to strike only into the wooden bars of his cage.

I say then: to be allowed, with his permission, to make objections against Religion and the Bible, against what he calls Religion and Bible, is only nonsense. He does, and does not give permission: for he guards it with clauses on all sides, in so strict and pettifogging a way, that one must beware of making use of it.

The clause, with regard to the language, I have sufficiently elucidated. I have also touched upon the clauses respecting the persons and the object. But there still remains the clause in reference to the point itself, which the objections are only to be able to meet; and this more especially deserves that we dwell upon it for a moment, the more fair it sounds, the less, at first sight, would one be likely to take exception to it. "Only the attacking party," are the words of the Reverend Gentleman, "must "not have the liberty to slander as blockheads, as "knaves, and as resurrection-men, the holy men "of God, of whom the whole of Christendom "believes, that they spake and wrote, moved by "the Holy Ghost."

As we have said, this sounds so reasonable, that one might almost be ashamed, to take any exception to it. And yet it is, at the bottom, nothing more than trickery, or paltriness. For only let us perfectly understand one another. Does the Reverend Gentleman only desire that the attacking party should not

have the liberty of employing such abusive names, as he puts in his mouth, instead of reasons? Or does he wish also that the attacking party should also not have the liberty, to touch upon such things and facts, from the proof of which it would follow, that these names apply *in a measure* to the Apostles? This is the question, which he of course has not overlooked. If he only desires the former, his demand is most just; but it implies a paltriness, far above which the Christian would wish to place himself. Empty abuse does not vex him, whether it be directed against himself, or his faith. Calm contempt is all which he opposes to it. Woe unto his adversary, who encounters him, and has nothing better to combat with!

But if the Reverend Gentleman also desires the latter: he employs tricks, which only a theological poltroon would so far debase himself as to use; and every one must oppose himself to him, who has the truth of the Christian Religion at heart.—For what? Has the Christian Religion unsound parts, which absolutely endure no touching? which one dares not even ventilate? Or if it has no such parts, why should its friends be perpetually hearing the reproach,—"that one does not dare "say all, which one could say against it"? This reproach is so lowering,—so tormenting! I repeat it: a theological poltroon alone can fail to wish to see an end put to it,—can through his conduct any longer give just occasion to it. Not that I

should prefer the theological bully, who in the middle of the pavement snaps his fingers at the people-shunning free-thinker, who slinks along under the houses and calls out in defiance: "Come out, "if you have anything to say"! I cannot bear either; and what is most remarkable is, that not unfrequently poltroon and bully are united in one person. But I believe, that the true Christian neither plays the one, nor the other; too distrustful of his reason,—too proud of his sensibility.

So much with regard to the requisition of the Reverend Gentleman, considered generally. I come to the particular case, which he has in his mind. For it must be my anonymous, who makes use of a freedom, which he ought not to have.

But where then has he made use of it? Where has he slandered the Apostles as blockheads, knaves and resurrection-men? I defy the Reverend Gentleman to point out to me a single passage in the Fragments, where he throws about him such honorable titles. You and you alone, Reverend Sir, have done so, to whom they have first occurred either through the tongue, or from the pen. He must, in the name of the anonymous, slander the Apostles, in order that he might slander the anonymous.

And that it may not be thought, as though I wished to defend my anonymous merely by shewing, that those titles of honour are not to be found literally in him! My anonymous has not even *positively* asserted anything about the Apostles, which could

make them deserving of them; nowhere has he ascribed to them the substance of the same.

It is not true, that my anonymous positively says: "Christ is not risen, but his disciples have "stolen his corpse." He has neither convicted, nor wished to convict the Apostles of this robbery. He is too well convinced, that he could not convict them of this. For a suspicion,—even a very plausible one, is very far from being a proof.

My anonymous merely says: this suspicion, which his brain has not hatched,—which is derived from the New Testament itself,—this suspicion is not so fully removed and refuted, by Matthew's recital of the guarding of the sepulchre, but that it might still remain *probable* and *credible;* in as much as the above mentioned narrative is not only highly suspicious in its internal construction, but also an ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, such as deserves little credit in history generally, and here so much the less, because those, who were most interested in believing it, never trusted to appeal to it.

Who does not see then, that it is here less a question about the truth of the matter, than the credible nature of the narrative? And seeing that the narration of a matter perfectly true may appear very incredible: who does not see, that this incredible nature of that truth is only so far prejudicial, as one wishes to make the truth, singly and solely, depend on the narration?

And allowing, that my anonymous had not kept

within these bounds, he would not only have wished to shew, what every good Catholic can believe and maintain without demur, that in the *written* narration of the Evangelists and apostles *singly and solely*, certain sacred occurrences do not appear so unquestionable, as to require no further corroboration; allowing that he had accepted the probable as true, the credible as undeniable, that he had regarded it as absolutely proved, that the Apostles had removed the body of Jesus: yet I am still convinced, that he in the case of these men, through whom so unspeakably much good has come into the world, as he himself does not deny, that he, I say, would have spared these, to us in every respect dear men, the abusive names *deceivers*, *knaves*, *resurrection-men*, with which the Reverend Gentleman is so ready. And it is true, he would not only have spared them out of courtesy,—not only out of care not to offend: but he would have spared them, because he must have been convinced, that it would have been going too far.

For if it be true, that moral actions, let them happen in ever so different times, among ever so different peoples, considered in themselves, remain the same; nevertheless the same actions have not always the same appellations, and it is unjust, to give to any one of them another appellation, than that, which they were wont to bear in their times, and among their people. Now it is demonstrated and proved, that the oldest and most revered

Fathers of the Church held a deception, practised with a good intent, to be no deception, and have not scrupled to attribute this same mode of thinking to the Apostles themselves. Whoever wishes to read this point laid down and made clear by an unsuspected Theologian himself, let him read *Ribov's* Programme *de Œconomia patrum.* The passages are undeniable, which Ribov collects, even with profusion, in order to prove, that the Fathers, nearly without exception, were firmly of opinion, *integrum omnino Doctoribus et cætus Christiani Antistibus esse, ut dolos versent, falsa veris intermisceant et imprimis religionis hostes fallant, dummodo veritatis commodis et utilitati inserviant.* Likewise the passages of the other kind, where the Fathers attribute to the Apostles themselves a like *οἰκονομίαν,* a like *falsitatem dispensativam*, are just as undeniable. What Jerome among others asserts of St. Paul* is so *naif*, that it strikes even the *naif* Ribov himself, which however not the less remains the real opinion of Jerome.

Let it not be said, that this, now to us, so strange a representation of the uprightness of the first Fathers and Apostles, concerns only undue advantage in exposition, only in the words. Words and actions lie not so far apart, as is generally thought. Whoever is capable, in spite of knowing better and of conscience, of distorting a passage, is capable of

* Paulus in testimoniis, quæ sumit de veteri testamento, quam artifex, quam prudens, quam dissimulator est ejus quod agit!

every other deception; can bear false testimony, can interpolate writings, can invent facts, can hold as allowable every means of confirming them.

God forbid, that I should wish it to be understood, that the Apostles were capable of *all* these things because the Fathers held them to be capable of *one!* I will only suggest the question: whether even in the spirit, in which we judge of them now in respect to this *one* thing, a candid man would not be obliged, at any rate, to judge of them in respect to *the rest*, if it really were incumbent upon them.

And such a candid person my anonymous most assuredly was. He has not demanded in heavy money the payment of any debt, which was contracted in light money. He has not judged any crime, committed under more indulgent laws, by more recent and more severe ones. He has assigned no appellation, which did not belong to the abstract notion of the deed in their time, to the concrete notion of the doer in our time. He might always believe in his heart that we are *deceived*, but he has taken great care not to say that we have been *deceived* by *deceivers*.

Every one, who makes my anonymous assert this last, because he can bring home to him, that he has believed the first, is himself guilty of deception, in order to excite a people, who are capable of making no distinction. But I leave it undecided, whether this object belongs to such as justify

a deception. At least I do not yet see, what benefit is to arise from it; and I must first discover, whether the people themselves of the present time, are not already wiser and more sensible, than the preachers, who would so willingly set them on.

Mr. Goeze knows very well that my anonymous in reality only maintains, that the Apostles did precisely, what all legislators, all founders of new religions and states thought it expedient to do. But that does not so clearly strike the people, for whom he writes and preaches. So he speaks to the people the language of the people, and bawls out, that my anonymous slanders the Apostles as *deceivers* and *knaves*.—This is sonorous! this produces effect! —But, as we said, perhaps it does not. For even the most insignificant people, if only well directed by their rulers, become from time to time more enlightened, more moral and better: instead of, as is the fundamental principle with certain preachers, eternally remaining stationary at the same point of morality and religion, at which their forefathers stood many hundred years ago. They do not tear themselves from the people, but the people at length tear themselves loose from them.

LETTER X.

Non leve est, quod mihi impingit tantæ urbis pontifex.
HIERON. ADV. RUFFINUM.

1778.

I HAVE proved that the advantages, which Religion derives *objectively* from the doubts and objections, with which the, as yet unsubjugated, reason assails it, are so essential and great, that all the disadvantage *subjectively*, from which more is feared, than really arises, deserves not to be taken into consideration; which is quite clear, because the subjective disadvantage only exists, until the objective advantage begins to manifest itself, in which moment henceforth, the objective advantage begins to be also an advantage subjectively.—I have proved that, accordingly, the Church, which understands its true interest, cannot entertain the idea of limiting, in any way, the liberty of combatting Religion; either in regard to language or persons, by whom alone, and in which alone, the combat may be allowed. I have proved, that, least of all, should an exception of points be allowed to be made, which the combat should not touch; because thereby a

suspicion would arise, which would certainly bring more injury upon Religion, than the combatting of the excepted points themselves could ever occasion.—

If it is clear from this, that the Church must never *wish* to have the right to stifle in their birth, or never even to allow to come to their birth, writings directed against her, of whatever nature they may be, it is then through the better teaching of their authors; if these authors themselves, in whom it only prosecutes their error, enjoy all the indulgence from it, which one so willingly extends to them, who against their will, which only seeks to compass our ruin, do us good; how can it regard him as its enemy, in whom it has not even to prosecute his own error, (of Lessing) who only makes known the errors of others, (of Reimarus) in order to procure to it, the sooner, the better, the advantage to be expected from it? How can the editor of a free-thinking book have to apprehend resentment from it, with which it would not regard even the author of it? When Jerome translated from the Greek, a work which was, according to his own judgment, the highest degree injurious to the true Christian Religion—it was the books of Origen περὶ ἀρχῶν—let it be well observed "*translated*"! And *to translate* is certainly more, than merely *to publish*.—As he translated these dangerous writings with the intention of rescuing them from the misrepresentations and mutilations of another translator, Ruffinus, that is, to bring

them before the Latin world, in their full force, with all their seductions; and a certain *Schola tyrannica* upbraided him on this account, as if he had a very culpable offence upon his soul: what was his answer? *O impudentiam singularem! Accusant medicum, quod venena prodiderit.*—I confess I do not know, what he precisely meant to say by that *Schola tyrannica.* And it would be astonishing, if there had been already such people among the Christian teachers as *Goeze!*—But I have given a similar answer for myself: "Am I to be supposed "to have brought the plague into the country, be- "cause I pointed out the poison, which lurked in "the darkness, to the council of health?" Truly, when I began to publish the Fragments, I did not know, or at any rate did not mention, the circumstance, which I here *seem* to wish to use in justification of an undertaking, in which I neither took nor could take it at all into account. I did not know, or did not mention, that the book is extant entire, is extant in several places, and produces no less effect in manuscript on that account, because the effect is not striking. But I only *seem* to wish to employ this circumstance in my justification.

I am even without it, sufficiently justified by the fact, that I, when I had made known, on some occasion, a very innocent passage from the work of my anonymous, was requested, to communicate more of it. Yes, I will lay myself still more open.

I will at once acknowledge, that I even without

any request, would have done what I have. I should only perhaps have done it a little later.

In truth, I have quite a superstitious regard for every written book, especially one only existent in manuscript, from which I perceive, that the author desires either to instruct or gratify the world. I lament, when I see, that death, or other causes, neither more nor less welcome to an active man, can frustrate so many good intentions; and I feel myself so far in the position, in which every man, worthy of the name, finds himself, at the sight of a child exposed. He is not content, with not absolutely destroying him, with letting it lie uninjured and undisturbed, where he finds it; he has it conveyed or carries it into the Foundling Hospital, that it may at least receive baptism and a name. He would do one rather than the other; in proportion as the one is more agreeable to him than the other; according as the one *squeezes his finger more than the other.** Just so at least I desired—for what would be the consequence, if on that account so many more ragamuffins, should become worked at in the same way, that they may be capable of bearing the traces of an immortal mind?—at least I desired, to be able to bring all and every exposed birth of the mind, at once, into the great Foundling Hospital appointed for them, the Printing-office: and if I myself only introduce, in reality, a few, the

* Lessing seems to allude to the fairy ring which *squeezed the finger*, to convey a moral lesson.—TRANSL.

fault certainly is not mine alone. I do what I can; and let every one only do as much. The cause itself does not often rest with me alone, why I prefer bringing to it this, sooner than that, why I must let my finger be squeezed by the more healthy and friendly foundling: but here, in most cases, so many little unobserved causes work together, that one may well say, *habent sua fata libelli.*

Yet never have I been able to reflect on this my weakness,—through which, I do not know whether I should say, I was born to be a librarian, or neglected by nature to be a librarian,—never, I say without esteeming my peculiar position a fortunate one, I am very fortunate, in being a librarian *here*, and not *elsewhere.* I am very fortunate, that I am *this* nobleman's librarian, and *no other's.*— Among the heathen Philosophers, who wrote in the first centuries against Christianity, *Porphyry* must undoubtedly have been the most dangerous, as he was, according to all conjecture, the most acute and learned. For his fifteen books κατὰ Χριστιανῶν were so carefully sought out and destroyed, by order of Constantine and Theodosius, that not even a single fragment of them has come down to us. Even the thirty and more authors, who had written expressly against him, among whom very great names are found, are lost on that account; probably because they had cited too many and too lengthy passages of their opponent, who was to be put completely out of the world.—But if it be true,

as *Isaac Vossius* wishes to persuade *Salvius*,* that nevertheless one copy of these formidable books of Porphyry is still somewhere extant; namely in the Medicean library at Florence, where however it is kept so secret, that nobody must read it,—nobody communicate the smallest portion of it to the world: truly then I would not willingly be librarian there at Florence, though I could likewise be Grand Duke. Or what is more, I would only be so on condition, that I might immediately remove a prohibition so injurious to truth and to Christianity, that I might immediately have Porphyry printed in my Ducal Palace, and immediately give up the Grand Duchy, which is already burdensome to me, even in idea, to its lawful owner.—

Abelard is the man, who was in my mind in a former passage, when I said, that, even in those barbarous times, more objections were made against Religion, than the monks were pleased to answer, who, for the sake of their loved shortness and ease,† were ready to send him at once to the devil, who ventured to bring his objections to light. For are we to believe, that in spite of the controversies which *St. Bernard* started against different writings of *Abelard;* in spite of the collection, which *Amboise*, to his no slight danger, made of Abelard's writings;

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* Ritmeicri Conringiana Epistolica, p. 71.

† The Monks loved hours of study to be short and the subject easy.—TRANSL.

in spite of the gleanings, which *Martene* and *Durand* and *B. Petz* have added to this collection, that, I say, the work of Abelard is still wanting, from which his religious opinions must be principally discovered? *D'Achery* had found it, in I know not what library, and had taken a copy of it, and was willing to have it printed. But *D'Achery* either went, or was obliged to go into deliberation on the matter with other learned men,—also Benedictines without doubt, —and so nothing could come of the printing; the happily discovered work of Abelard, *in quo, genio suo indulgens, omnia christiana religionis mysteria in utramque partem versat* was condemned *to perpetual darkness.** *D'Achery's* copy came into the hands of *Martene* and *Durand;* and these men, who had rescued from destruction so much historical and theological refuse, had just as little heart, to preserve a little bit more of refuse for the world; because it was only philosophical refuse.—Poor pamphlet! If you fell into my hands, I would as surely have you printed, as I am no Benedictine!—But I could almost wish to be one, if one could only, as such, have the opportunity of seeing more such manuscripts. What if I were expelled from the order, the very first year?

And that I certainly should be. For I should wish to have too much printed, which the order would refuse permission to bring forward. The old

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* Thes. Anecdot. T. V. Præf.

Lutheran would too often reproach me; and I should never be able to persuade myself, that a maxim, which is so tolerable to the papal hierarchy, could be also tolerable to true Christianity.

"Yet all this implies only a wish to excuse a "misdeed, through the desire, by which one is irre- "sistibly impelled to commit it. For if it is your "weakness, to take in hand deserted manuscripts, "then you must suffer for your weakness. Enough "no part whatever of this MSS. should have been "published, because it is quite as bad as the *Toldos Jeschu.*"* Well remarked! And so likewise the *Toldos Jeschu* ought not to have been printed? And were they, who made it known to us, and made it known by the press, no Christians?

It is true that he who first upbraided the Christians with it, was only a baptized Jew. But Porchetus? But Luther? And Wagenseil, who thought himself obliged to rescue the Hebrew original! O the the indiscreet, the malicious Wagenseil!† But for this scarce one in a thousand Jews would have been able to read the Toldos Jeschu; now all can read it. And what besides will he one day have heavily to answer before the judgement-seat of God, the wicked Wagenseil! The abominable Voltaire has

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* תולדות ישוע "History of Jesus." The weakest of ancient Jewish treatises against Christianity. The other treatises, viz: נצחון "*victory*," by Rabbi Lipman; and Rabbi Isaac's "*Strengthening of the Faith*," are far more interesting and important.—TRANSL.

† In his *Tela ignea Satanæ.*

made his scurrilous extracts from this edition, which he would have been unable to do, if he had been obliged to look out the book in the old print of Raymundus or Porchetus.—

Is it not true, Reverend Sir? I add: which Voltaire also would have been obliged to let alone, if Wagenseil had had the obnoxious book printed in Hebrew and German,* instead of Hebrew and Latin. This might serve as a little example, of what general benefit it is, when the works against Religion are only to be had in Latin. Is it not so, Reverend Sir?

Meanwhile, Reverend Sir, Wagenseil has tolerably well defended his undertaking in the ample preface to his "*Tela ignea Satanæ.*" And perhaps you will allow me to adduce one single passage from it, in which I think that I also am included? It is that, which, in a few words embraces nearly all the substance of the whole preface:—

Neque vero, non legere tantum hæreticorum scripta, sed et opiniones illorum manifestare, librorumque ab iis compositorum, sive fragmenta aut compendia, sive integrum contextum, additis quidem plerumque confutationibus, aliquando tamen etiam sine iis, publice edere, imo et blasphemias impiorum hominum recitare, viri docti piique olim et nunc fas esse arbitrati sunt.

* For the Hebrew and German languages were among the very few branches of learning, in which Voltaire was not accomplished.—TRANSL.

LETTER XI.

Ne hoc quidem nudum est intuendum, qualem causam vir bonus, sed etiam quare, et qua mente defendat.

QUINTILIANUS.

1778.

But the Reverend Gentleman will grow angry, that I pursue him step by step, till I get him at last in a corner, where he cannot escape from me. He will already, before I have quite hemmed him in, endeavour to escape me, and say: "Ah, who "is speaking then of mere printing? He might, "it is true, be thus excused. The real crime consists "in the fact, that the Editor of the Fragments has "also undertaken to advocate the cause of the "author."

To advocate? To advocate the cause of the Author?—What advocacy then had my anonymous, which I have undertaken in his behalf? The advocacy is the privilege to be allowed to conduct certain suits before certain courts. I am not aware that my anonymous has any where had such a privilege.—One is to understand his privilege, in this, in defending the healthy human understanding before the public. Nevertheless every one has this

privilege by Nature, every one gives it himself of himself; no one requires first to accept it from another. It is neither a butcher's-stall* nor a parsonage. But to find fault so with the Reverend Gentleman's words! To scrutinize so narrowly in him, what he says; and not much rather, what he wishes to say! He wishes to say, that I have undertaken to be the advocate of the anonymous; have laid myself out as such. This he means to say; and I bet ten to one, that no wheel-barrow-driver understands him otherwise.—

And so he has said it!—If I only see, where the way would lead further. For here also, streets run towards all quarters of the heavens.—It is true, if I knew, what sort of notion the Reverend Gentleman has of an advocate, I would soon find the straight path, to dive into his thoughts.

If the Reverend Gentleman should here, for the novelty's sake, form the right conception? If he should know and mean the real advocate? mean under this name the honest man, who is thoroughly acquainted with the law, and undertakes no suit, but those of whose justice he is convinced?—No, no; he cannot mean him. For I have nowhere said, that I hold the whole cause of my anonymous, entirely as it is, to be good and true. I have never said so; much rather I have said just the reverse. I have said and proved, that, if the anonymous is

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* Which require a licence to hold them.—TRANSL.

right in so many single points, still in the whole that does not follow therefrom, which he seems to wish.

I venture boldly to add, what will appear like a kind of boast. Enough, that candid readers know cases, where such extorted boasting is necessary; and readers of feeling are fully aware that the case in which I find myself here, is by no means one of slight importance.—

I have not only expressly said, that I am not pledged to the opinions of my anonymous; and up to the period, when I undertook the publication of the Fragments, I have never written, or openly maintained the slightest thing, which could expose me to the suspicion, of being a secret enemy of the Christian Religion. On the other hand, I have written more than one trifle, in which I have not only exhibited the Christian Religion generally, with regard to its teaching and teachers, in the best light, but also especially have defended the Orthodox, Lutheran, Christian Religion against Roman Catholics, Socinians and Neologians.

The Reverend Gentleman himself is acquainted with the greatest part of these, and he has been kind enough, before now, to express his approbation by word of mouth and in print. How is it that he now first recognizes the devil in me, who had clad himself, if not in the garb of an angel of light, yet at least, in that of a man, not of the worst stamp? Is it possible that I am actually transformed, since

I no longer breathe the same air as himself? Can we suppose that the various acquirements and better views, which, since our separation, I have had as much desire as opportunity to acquire, have made me only more short-sighted and worse? Am I now first carelessly to founder on the rocks, which I have avoided in the stormy age of boisterous surges, when softer winds* waft me to the harbour, in which I hope to land as joyfully, as he does?—Certainly not, certainly not; I am still the same man; but the Reverend Gentleman sees me no longer with the same eye. His choler has got the better of his sight, and the bile overflowed—where? Who will believe it, if I tell it! *Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?*—But I must not serve the dessert before the soup.

I come back to the advocacy and say: the real, proper advocate of my anonymous, who should be one heart and one soul with his client with regard to the pending controversy, I neither am, nor can be. Nay, I cannot even be the man, who has only a slight glimpse of the justice of his client's cause, and nevertheless commits himself at a venture on the sea of chicanery, either from friendship, or other circumstances; firmly resolved, to take advantage of every gust, in order to land him somewhere in safety. For the anonymous was not my friend; and I know nothing in the world, which should induce me, to prefer occupying myself with his

* The passions of youth having subsided.—Transl.

writings, rather than with fifty others, which would not occasion me so much annoyance, and trouble; if it were not my desire, as soon as possible, even in my own life-time, to see them refuted.

I solemnly affirm, the avowal of this desire, though I have made hitherto little parade of it, is no empty subterfuge. But I confess this desire is interested; highly interested. I myself would willingly take with me out of the world somewhat of the refutation. I am in want of it. For it was only right that I, as librarian, should read the Fragments of my anonymous; and it was quite natural, that they, in several parts, both embarrassed and made me uneasy. They contained so many different things, which my little bit of acuteness and learning, was insufficient properly to explain. I see here and there, for a thousand miles, no answer; and the Reverend Gentleman cannot imagine, how sorely such an embarrassment for an answer disquiets a truth-loving spirit.

Am I then nothing to myself? Have I no duty to myself, to seek my tranquillisation where I think to find it? And where could I better expect to find it, than with the public? I perfectly understand, that an individual is bound to sacrifice his own *temporal* well-being to the well-being of the many. But is it so with his *eternal* welfare? What before God and man can bind me, rather not to wish to free myself from tormenting doubts, than through their publication to offend men weak of faith?—Let the Reverend Gentleman answer this.

Certainly I have had no *special* permission, out of the literary treasures committed to me, to communicate to the world *fiery coals* of this kind. I thought this special permission to be included in the general one, which my most gracious patron has been pleased to grant me. If, through this belief, I have shown myself unworthy of his confidence, I lament my misfortune, and am liable to punishment. Most willingly would I fall into the hands of candid justice, if God only will protect me from the hands of the angry priest. And what moreover will this angry priest say, if I take this opportunity to avow, that the anonymous himself was not in a hurry to come to light. That I have now dragged him to light, is not only without, but indeed against his will; I am led to apprehend this from the beginning of a preface, which had especially come to view before I determined to introduce him to the world.

It runs thus: "The writing, for which I am "preparing the preface, was composed by me many "years ago. Yet as occasion offered by repeated "reading, I have added in many places, in others "shortened or altered. Only my own satisfaction "was the motive from the very beginning, for "writing down my thoughts; and I never afterwards "was inclined, to lead the world astray, or give "it cause of uneasiness, through my views. The "work may lie concealed, for the use of intelligent "friends; with my consent it should not be made

"public through the press, before the times are "more enlightened. Better the mass of the people "remain awhile in error, than that I, though "without my fault, should offend them with truths, "and rouse them to a furious religious zeal. Better "the wise man, for quiet's sake, should bow to the "prevailing opinions and customs,—bear with them "and be silent; than that he should make himself "and others unhappy, through too hasty a manifesta-"tion. For I must say beforehand, the positions "contained herein are not in the nature of a cate-"chism, but remain within the limits of a reasonable "adoration of God, and practice of philanthropy "and virtue. But as I wished fully to satisfy myself "and my rising doubts; I could not but funda-"mentally investigate the faith, which had caused "me so many stumbling-blocks, whether it could "consist with the rules of truth, or not."

Luther and all the saints! Reverend Sir, what have you read here! Is it not true? You never could have thought me so criminal?—The anonymous, with all his free-thinking, was still so honourable, that he was unwilling to mislead the world by *his own* views, and I, I do not hesitate, to lead it astray through the views of *another*. The anonymous was so peaceful a man, that he wished to give no occasion to uneasiness, and I, I overlook all the disquiet, of which you best know, Reverend Sir, how painful it becomes to a faithful and laborious pastor of souls, to rouse it only in one single town

to the honour of our most holy religion. The anonymous was so guarded a man, that he wished to offend no man with truth; and I, I do not believe at all in any such offence; firmly convinced, that not truths, which one brings forward merely for investigation, but those alone, which one would forthwith bring into practice, are calculated to excite the common people to a furious religious zeal. The anonymous was so prudent a man, that he desired to make neither himself nor others unhappy, by too hasty manifestations; and I, I as a madman, venture first my own security, because I am of opinion, that manifestations, if only well-founded, cannot be made too soon to the human race. My anonymous, who wrote, I know not when, thought, that the times must be more enlightened, before what he held as truth, could be openly preached: and I, I believe, that the times cannot become more enlightened, in order to investigate previously, whether that which he held to be truth, is really so.

It is all true, Reverend Sir; it is all true. If only there did not lie at the bottom of the praiseworthy modesty and foresight of the anonymous, too much confidence in his own demonstration,—too much contempt for the common man,—too much mistrust in his age!

If only, as a consequence to these considerations, he had rather destroyed his manuscript, than left them for the use of intelligent friends!—Or do you also think, Reverend Sir, that it is immaterial,

what the intelligent secretly believe, if only the people, the dear people, continue nicely in the track, in which alone the Clergy know how to lead them? Do you think so?

LETTER XII.

Qui auctorem libri dogmaticum absconditum mihi revelat, non tam utilitati meæ, quam curiositati servit: immo non raro damnum mihi affert, locum faciens præjudicio auctoritatis.

HEUMANNUS DE LIBR. AN. ET PSEUD.

1778.

THE complaint at my manner of disputing, I could only answer in this same manner; and I am satisfied that the Reverend Gentleman makes my answer itself a proof of his complaint. Why should I not, with good intent, give him still more proofs of a complaint, which I despise?

But the imputation that I have honoured the anonymous with unmerited and unmeasured panegyrics, with the doubly roguish intention, of insinuating a favourable predilection for him into the minds of shallow readers, and to frighten the opponents, who might array themselves against him: this charge is more serious, and merits a more serious answer. It is only a pity, that I am not in a position to make this more serious answer so luminous. For to be able to do this, the whole work of the anonymous must already lie before

the eyes of the world, because all my eulogies, wholly and solely, refer to, and have arisen out of one characteristic, of the same. And out of which? out of such an one, which may also be very well imagined of a work, which, in the main, shoots very wide of the mark. I have called it a candid, earnest, profound, argumentative, learned work: a number of qualities, out of which the truth of the subject therein treated by no means follows; and which I may easily attribute to the author, without taking him up and recommending him on that account as a man, on whom one may rely in all points. And these eulogies also by no means set forth, that I am intimately acquainted with him, or know him by several works: much less that I know or have known him personally.

For, however irritating it may have been to the Reverend Gentleman, that I have said plainly, "my "anonymous is of such weight, that in all kinds "of learning, seven *Goezes* are not capable of weigh- "ing one-seventh part of him:" I am confident of being able to make good this assertion, out of that part of his work, which is in my hands. Only the Reverend Gentleman must not extend what I say of all kinds of learning to all the *minutiæ* of these kinds. Thus it might, for instance, be particularly difficult for me to prove that my anonymous had just as extended and profound a knowledge of the Low-German Bibles, as the Reverend Gentleman. Even the different editions of the Lutheran Bible

translation could scarcely have been so perfectly known to him, as to the Reverend Gentleman; who has made such extraordinary discoveries in them, that he can explain to a hair, how much with each edition the orthodoxy of the blessed man had grown. But all these are only little particles of dust out of literary history, against which my anonymous would probably have to stake seven times seven as many other little particles of dust, in order to prove me no liar. And so with all the other branches of knowledge! Even with those, which the anonymous did not really, but only *virtually* possess. The reason is clear. He was a man of original thought; and it is only given to men of original thought, to survey the whole field of learning, and to know how to find every path of the same, as soon as it is worth while to tread it.

What infinitesimal portion of such an intellect has fallen to the lot of the Reverend Gentleman, is left to his own unbiassed judgment. Suffice it that seven times seven makes only forty-nine; and even a forty-ninth part of my anonymous is worth all high esteem and seven times more than is expected, in all places and ends of Christendom, in a Reverend or Right Reverend.

But stay! I have called my anonymous also an honourable, irreproachable man; and does this indeed presuppose, that I know him intimately and personally?—Not so either! And without much sheltering myself under the *Quilibet præsumitur*, &c., I will

only say at once, what grounds I have found in his work, to do him this justice also. For instance; though my anonymous confessedly sets aside all revealed religion: yet is he on that account so little a man without any religion, that I absolutely know no one, in whom I have found such true, comprehensive, and warm conceptions of mere *rational* religion, as in him. The whole of the first book of his work exhibits these conceptions; and how much rather would I have brought this first book to light, than another Fragment, which his overhasty opponents have forced from me. Not so much, because the speculative truths of reasonable religion are there set in a stronger light by new and more acute proofs; but much more, because it is there shown with unusual clearness, what influence these truths must have upon our duties, if rational religion is to pass into a rational service of God. All which he says of this influence particularly, carries the most unmistakeable sign, that it has flowed from just as enlightened a head, as pure heart; and I cannot possibly imagine, that in this head with these exalted views, in this heart with these noble dispositions, mad, wilful error, petty, selfish affections can abide and prevail. *In eodem pectore*, says Quintilian, *nullum est honestorum turpiumque consortium; et cogitare optima simul ac deterrima non magis est unius animi, quam ejusdem hominis bonum esse ac malum.*—This, this was the reason, why I felt myself justified to call

my anonymous an honourable, irreproachable man, without having evidences of it from his private life.

It is true I once thought, that I recognized him in the person of the Bible translator of Wertheim; and not long ago the unasked for assertion of a respectable man here might have strengthened me in this belief. This man had before cultivated much intercourse with *Schmid;* and I have his written testimony in my hands. But *Mr. Mascho* had, by so many conclusions, *a priori*, so powerfully combatted my delusion, or whatever he may take it for, that I really could have no respect for such conclusions *in rebus facti*, if I did not at least become doubtful. It is true several of these conclusions are somewhat lame; for instance, that which is taken from *Wolf's* Philosophy, which *Schmid* had so completely made his own, and of which in my anonymous no trace is to be found. For with permission of *Mr. Mascho*, the just cited first book is founded entirely on *Wolf's* definitions; and if in all the rest, the strict mathematical method is less apparent, the subject matter only is in fault, which was incapable of it. I must likewise honestly acknowledge to *Mr. Mascho*, that I do not see, how my assertion that the MS. of my anonymous is at least thirty years old, is on that account untenable, because mention is there made of *Wetstein*, and of the passage 1 John v. 7. It is true, *Wetstein's* New Testament first came out in 1751; but the *Prolegomena* had appeared about 1730, and the controversy about the

passage in John is still older. But what good would it do, if I were allowed to be right in these little matters? I, for my part, as soon as I observed, that I had been too hasty in my conjecture about *Schmid*, resolved, never again to indulge in any such conjecture. Yes, I was henceforth determined, even if I became perfectly acquainted with the name, nevertheless never more to make it known to the world. And, by God's help, I abide by this resolution; supposing I really had become acquainted with it since then. What wretched curiosity, curiosity about a name! about a couple of letters, which are arranged thus or thus! I allow it to hold good, if we learn with and through the name, how far we can rely upon the testimony of a sneak. But here, where it is not a question of testimonies, of things, which simply rest upon testimonies; where reason is to prove the grounds in her own way: of what consequence is the name of him, who is the mere instrument of these grounds? It is not only useless; but it often injures, because it gives room for a prejudice, which so lamentably detracts from all reasonable proofs. For either the anonymous is recognised as a man, who was neither wanting in the will or power of knowing the truth; and the people, to whom thinking is so disagreeable, are immediately carried away blindly by him. Or it is found, that the anonymous has been under a cloud; and immediately the people will have nothing at all to do with him; fixed in the charming opinion,

that he, who is deficient in one sense, must necessarily be wanting in all five.—So even literary men judge, who deem it no unimportant thing, to hunt down anonymous and pseudonymous writers: and am I to judge and act more unphilosophically, than these men, who have a right thus to talk, to make useless and unphilosophical discoveries? *Prudentis est*, says Heumann, in the same place, whence the motto of this piece is taken, *ita quos vis dogmaticos libros legere, quasi auctor plane sit ignotus.* Here the *quasi* is real. The reader has no occasion to forget, what he does not know.

And now it may be imagined, how I looked, when I, impressed with these ideas, read the following passage of the Reverend Gentleman. "Finally, "I again remind Mr. Lessing, that it is his duty, "to name *the author of the Fragments*, since he has "threatened, and tried to intimidate his opponents "by the discovery of his name, for it cannot be "unknown to him, what learned irreproachable men "have been given out as the author of these abor- "tions. The fault, that their ashes are so unjustifi- "ably defiled, rests with him, as long as he keeps "back the name; and he can have so much less "hesitation in revealing it, since he has already "honoured with such eulogies the author and his "work." What? Have I threatened to name the author of the Fragments? Where then? And is my duty grounded upon that, no longer to keep his name in the back ground? Upon this? As the

duty, so the motive to the fulfilment of the same! I have given warning, not to meet the anonymous in too childish and school-boy a way, lest one should be ashamed, when it is at length discovered, who he was. Is that threatening? Is that a threat, that it shall be disclosed by *me?*—That *I* at last will declare the name?—If the Reverend Gentleman has not here knowingly and premeditatedly written a falsehood: it is at least a proof, how he reads me. He never reads that, which I have written: but only that, which he would wish to have me write.

LETTER XIII.

Scandal or no Scandal!—What care I? Necessity can break through iron, and without Scandal! I would spare the weak conscience, so far as may be, without danger to my soul. But if this may not be, I would guard the interests of my soul, though half or all the world be scandalized thereby.

LUTHER.

1778.

NEXT it is absolutely unknown to me, what learned and irreproachable men, doubtless on the illusive representations of Mr. Mascho and E. in Hamburg, have been given out as the authors of the Fragments. But I am glad, that several are known there, who could have written something of the kind. It is no disgrace to any one whoever he may be; and what the Reverend Gentleman said about unjustifiable defiling of their ashes, I can understand neither in its proper nor figurative sense. Ashes care not about being mixed with mud; and the spirit, which animated these ashes, stands before the eyes of him, to whom it is no trouble, to discriminate between the real and the imputed author. The groping curiosity of mortals is a game for both, which is not worth their looking on; and whoever

reasonably endeavours to satisfy first this curiosity, most exasperates these sporting children.

If the Reverend Gentleman does not wish to be classed with these inquisitive, sporting children, let him only say, with what serious object in view, he would learn the name of my anonymous. Can he have his ashes burnt to ashes again? Shall his bones no longer rest in the earth, which so willingly received them? Are they to be ground to dust, thrown into the water,—strewed to the wind? The earth, in both cases, dear Reverend Sir, receives them again. Or would you have the pleasure, to be able to write throughout all Germany, if anywhere a relation or descendant is to be found, whom you may make feel, that he has in his line, or in his collateral lineage, ascending or descending, had such a good-for-nothing fellow?—Who is to blame, if he judges so badly of you? For men cannot argue altogether without grounds. No one, I hope, will endeavour to persuade me, who knows the licentiate, that he himself does not perceive as well as I do, how childish and useless this whole name-hunt is. And suppose even, that he were not of the same mind with me in this, that the name when discovered would even be *injurious* in the investigation of the matter; at any rate he will not deny, that it would be prejudicial to the tranquillity and reputation to all those, who did not like to disown in the discovered author a friend or relation.—The curiosity of an honourable man

willingly halts, when love of the truth impels it no farther, and love of his neighbour requires it to do so.

Certainly it were so much the better, if the letters, which the licentiate has in his hands, put out of the question a man, whom many a weak fellow might wish as his guarantee. In fact, I myself know no one of the more recent learned men in all Germany, for whom it would be more excuseable to be prejudiced in such matters, than him. But even on that account I would not willingly point to this man, and if he himself, in his own glorified person, had brought me the papers from that world, with the express request, to publish them in his name; and if afterwards he again appeared every second night, and repeated the same request, under I know not what threats or promises, I would say to him: "Dear Spirit, I will most "willingly publish your manuscript; though I am "sure that the matter is not without danger, and "they will upbraid me, with wishing to offend "thereby weak consciences. For with regard to "this offence, I think with Luther. Enough, I "cannot without danger to my soul put thy manu-"script under a bushel. It has raised doubts in me, "which I must have removed. And who else but "the public can remove them for me? To apply "for that purpose by private letters to this or that "theologian, costs money and time; and I have not "too much of these to throw away. Therefore, as I

" said, I will willingly publish your work; but why " should I not publish it without your name; are " you become more vain in yonder world, than you " were in this? Or does your name form a part " of the evidence? If you attach importance to this " childish, vexatious ambition: I know, whence you " come. The glory which is about your head, is " deceptive; for you are little enough, to desire " another by its side."—

This fancy reminds me again of the proposition, which I was about to make before.—If my anonymous did not write from conviction; not from inward impulse, to impart to his neighbour, what he held to be true: he can have had no other motive, than pitiful vain-glory, *gloriæ cupiditatem sacrilegam;* and I find in all history no one to compare with him, except the madman, who wanted to burn the temple of Diana at Ephesus, *ut opere pulcherrimo consumpto, nomen ejus per totum terrarum orbem disjiceretur.* When the enthusiast confessed on the rack this phrensy: what did the Ephesians do? They determined, in order to punish him in the most sensitive point, that no one should mention his name; and we should not know it to this day, the name of the vain fool, if Theopompus in his Histories had been willing to submit to this prudent arrangement. I follow the wise Ephesians; in spite of Theopompus, after the example of Valerius, I do not name the monstrous coxcomb; and I submit: how, if we made a like arrangement among our-

selves, and never named the sacrilegious wretch, (supposing, that we either knew or discovered his name) who, from vain-glory, would blast the rock, on which Christ built his Church?—I imagine I collect the votes, I begin with the *Patres conscripti* of Lutheranism, an *Ernesti*, a *Semler*, a *Teller*, a *Jerusalem*, a *Spalding*, &c. and come down to the most insignificant village priest, who supplies his wants in the voluntary notices; and all, all give their votes in the affirmative.

Only one, one only, the Reverend Mr. Goeze says No. No! he thunders; and once more No! It is not enough that the anonymous is put to eternal shame in yonder world; he must also be put to shame in this transitory world. Amen! he adds; Amen!

LETTER XIV.

Pro boni viri officio, si quando eum ad defensionem nocentium ratio duxerit, satisfaciam.

QUINCTILIANUS.

1778.

I COME at length to the *third* point, whereby I am made to come forward as the advocate of the anonymous. It consists in my conduct towards those, who take up the cause of the Christian Religion against him.

This censure contains two propositions, to each of which I must answer separately. Either it is found strange and wrong, that I in general defend the anonymous against his adversaries; or it is found at the same time so much the more strange and more wrong, that I do it in the tone, which they so highly upbraid in me.

With regard to the first, I think I have already partly answered, that I gave myself out, not to speak for him as an advocate, who is determined to make his cause prevail. I only speak as an upright man, who will not see him condemned in so tumultuous a manner. At the utmost, I only

so speak, as an advocate *assigned* to a criminal speaks; and speak only *in his stead;* and speak only, as one is wont to express himself in common life, *to his soul.* But I am so much the more bound to do so, because I have the greater part of his papers in my hands. It were treason to innocence, he may have more or less claim to it, if I found in these several papers the slightest thing, in any way to his advantage, and did not make it known. The treachery on *my* part would be so much greater, because I have been his publisher unasked, and have communicated pieces from him, as literary essays, which are torn from all connection, in which their real life consisted. Why would they not allow these essays to be, what they were meant to be? Why have they been thought worthy of more attention, than Fragments of any kind deserve, to which no one is bound, to commit himself? Why have these connecting points, through which the anonymous refers to something elsewhere proved, been a mere blind, and thereby my integrity, as well as his, subjected to the most uncharitable suspicion? But more of this in another place.

Here I may be allowed to add, what I am not ashamed to repeat, since it has been once stated, I have also thrust the anonymous into the world, because I did not wish to live with him alone, under one roof, any longer. He was incessantly in my ears, and I confess once more, that I had not always so much to oppose to his suggestions, as I could

have wished. A third party, thought I, must either bring us nearer together, or put us farther asunder: and this third party can be none other than the public.

But should I not lose all the advantage, which I promised myself through this step, if I do not pay attention to every word, and to every look, with which he is received in public? I must ask everyone, who is startled, or laughs, or is frightened, or blusters at him: how do you understand this? how do you prove this? And I shall be hardly satisfied with the first best answer of the first best opponent. For if it really were the best, the best is not always good: and I know the best answers for a thousand doubts, without finding a single good one among them.

Only let not this investigation, so hard to satisfy, be brought against me, as a proof, of what I so zealously deny. I shew myself just as little thereby the advocate of the anonymous (since it is to be called advocate) as I shew myself the advocate of the religion, which the anonymous attacks. For what has an upright advocate to do, before he undertakes a cause? After he has heard his client at sufficient length,—let him detail his case in all its length and breadth, examined and cross-examined him,* *in aliam rursus ei personam transeundum est*, AGENDUSQUE ADVERSARIUS, *proponendum*, *quidquid*

* Quinctil. L. xii.

omnino excogitari contra potest, quidquid recipit in ejusmodi disceptatione natura. Just so, do I. But he who replies most sharply to the defenders of religion, is not on that account most unfriendly to religion. For I become only thereby the champion of religion *interrogare quam infestissime, ac premere,* because likewise here, *dum omnia quærimus, aliquando ad verum, ubi minime expectavimus, pervenimus,* because likewise here, *optimus est in dicendo patronus incredulus.*

Hitherto I have been able to discharge this duty against myself but little. But I hope, in future, to do it better; and to do it with all the coolness, with all the moderation against the persons, which could consist with that strength and warmth for the subject, which alone Quinctilian can have thought of, in the expression *infestissime.*

"Ah but yes!" I hear the Reverend Gentleman exclaim—and I am at the *second* part of this censure. "Ah but yes! Let one depend on that, "and join issue with him! We have the ex- "perience of that; I and his neighbour. How "sneeringly has he written against us; how scorn- "fully; how contemptuously"!

Do you feel that, Reverend Sir? So much the better. Then I have gained my object with you; but not nearly done, what you deserved. For after all you do not really belong to the opponents of my anonymous. You have refuted him on no single point up to this hour; you have only abused him;

you are up to this hour only to be regarded as *my* opponent; only as the opponent of an opponent of the anonymous. And in the next place you have taken liberties against this opponent of the anonymous, which you could only partially have been allowed to take against the anonymous. You have accused me of hostile attacks upon the Christian religion; you have accused me of absolute blasphemies. Say yourself: do you know more infamous charges, than these? Do you know charges, which entail on one more unqualified hate and persecution? You rush upon me with this dagger, and am I to be able to defend myself against you no otherwise than with my hat in my hand? Am I to remain quite still and deliberate, that your black gown be not dusted? Am I so to moderate every breath, that your peruke lose no powder? You shout after the dog, "he is mad"! knowing well, what the boys in the street conclude from it: and is the poor dog not even to bark at you? is he not by barking to give you the lie? not to shew his teeth to you? That would be wonderful. Jerome says, that the charge of heresy (how much more that of irreligion?) is of that kind *in qua tolerantem esse, impietatis sit, non virtus.* And yet, yet I had rather be guilty of this impiety, than not to make light of a virtue which is none at all. *Decorum, bon ton, savoir vivre:* miserable virtues of our effeminate age! You are varnish, and nothing more. But just as often the varnish of vice, as of virtue. What do

I care, whether my representations have this gloss or not? It cannot increase their effect; and I do not wish, that one must first seek, at a distance, the true light for my picture.—Say on, Reverend Sir, what have I written against you, why you could not be and remain, as before, the head pastor in Hamburg? I on the other hand could not be, could not remain, what I am; if your lies were truth. Would you cut my nose off, and am I not to smoke your's with a little *assa fœtida?*—

It is true this is not quite my neighbour's case. But I have also no where treated him, like the Reverend Gentleman. Only his repeated reproach, that the anonymous will not see the truth, which he might see if he would; only this reproach, which turns a man so entirely into a devil; only this reproach, a greater part of the poison of which, as I have proved, he has squirted back upon me: has made me, in the course of the argument, more bitter against him, than I had intended to be. And how bitter have I been against him? The most bitter thing that I have said of him is "he "wrote in his sleep"! Nothing more? And will the Reverend Gentleman conclude from this, that *the Testament of John*,* in which universal brotherly love is so strongly recommended, cannot possibly be from me? Well then: so Jerome, from whom I took *the Testament of John*, had just as little of this

* See Note A.

love, as I; and I am perfectly satisfied, that I have just as much of it as Jerome; if not quite as much as the Reverend Mr. Goeze himself, who prefers sending his colleagues, from brotherly love, perpetually to sleep, rather than upbraid them with it. For Jerome says exactly to one of his opponents, neither more nor less, than I have said to my neighbour. He writes too with blunt words to Vigilantius: *Ego reor, et nomen tibi* κατ' ἀντίφρασιν *impositum. Nam tota mente dormitas, et profundissimo non tam somno stertis, quam lethargo.* The holy man likewise repeats the malicious quibble where ever he speaks of *Vigilantius;* and if I have counted right, he may have called him as often expressly *Dormitantius*, as I have taken the liberty, to disturb my neighbour in his sleep. Nor have I the least fear, that my neighbour himself has taken up this joke so warmly, that he has made up his mind to have nothing more to do with me. By this I most assuredly should lose too much; and I will rather immediately beg his pardon in the following words of Augustine: *Obsecro te per mansuetudinem Christi, ut si te læsi, dimittas mihi, nec, me vicissim lædendo, malum pro malo reddas. Lædes enim, si mihi tacueris errorem meum, quem forte inveneris in scriptis meis.*— Now I was just about to ask the question; which adversary of my anonymous, besides, I have opposed in an unbecoming, intimidating manner? when all at once a knight, with vizor neither up, nor down, vaults into the battle-field, and immediately in the

distance, in the true tone of one of Homer's heroes, calls out to me: "I was to"?—"How do you "know"?—"Why did you"?—"Is it not true"?— And hereupon an outcry about calumny, and a wedding-invitation certificate, that a subrector in an imperial city is just as much, as a librarian, who is styled court-councillor!—Aye, for my part ten times more! But does it apply to me? I do not know you, Sir Knight. With permission, who are you? You surely are not *Mr. M. Friedrich Daniel Behn*, subrector of the Lubeck gymnasium? Indeed! O how sorry I am, that I have written the subrector into a passion with my fourth Anti-Goeze, entirely against my will. But only think! I have no where named you; I have no where quoted your work; I have no where made use of your words. You say yourself, that the meaning, which I make ridiculous, is not your's. And it is very possible, that it really is not; though the Reverend Mr. Goeze much more misrepresents you, when he tells us, how much you complain in your second section of the *impropriety*, of controverting the Christian religion in the German language. What, if I only had to do with this man, who declares every thing improper, which is not adapted to his stuff? What if I only had to do with those, who have by word of mouth intimated this opinion to me a hundred times? How is it clear then, that I wished the world to understand, as if you were of this same opinion? Is it because I have put it into the mouth

of a subconrector? But you are not indeed subconrector, but subrector. Why should I be supposed to have rather degraded the latter in the former, than not to have meant the latter under the former? May I not then call a pedant subconrector, because Mr. Behn is subrector? Or do you wish absolutely to have first invented the differences between objective and subjective religion, and first used it; so that I must necessarily have made you known, because I have used it after you?—I observe, my dear Mr. Subrector, you are a little over proud; but even more hasty, than proud; and I pity your class. As often as a youth laughs, he must have laughed at the subrector,—*et vapulat.*

NOTE A.

The Testament of John.

Jerome says (in Epist. ad. Galatas, c. 6.)

The blessed Evangelist John, when he was tarrying in extreme old age at Ephesus, and was brought with difficulty to the church, in the arms of his disciples, was wont with faltering tongue, that had well nigh "forgot her cunning," to repeat only one sentence: "little children love one another." "Master," the disciples said, "why ever harping "upon one string?" "Because," he replied, in words worthy of that great Apostle, "it is our "Lord's command, and if realized sufficeth."

Upon this passage Lessing has written an interesting dialogue (Sämmtliche Schriften, v. 129—139, Berlin, 1818.)

The Book of Job.

The gem of the Bible; the most truthful portion, because wearing honestly the garb of a didactic poem, with supernatural agents introduced, merely as appropriate machinery.

To make Job a good Christian, by playing on the words, "my Redeemer," mars the whole scope of the work. With the Christian revelation of a future state, there would be no riddle of the Universe to solve, and comparatively no ground for distrust or impatience.

The author of Job has left a work of religious art, grand, sublime, immortal, as was the Olympian Zeus of Pheidias; but the Hebrew with more of religion, or less thirst for fame than the great Athenian,—what matters the name, when the hand that wrote is mouldering in the dust?—was content that his name be found written only in the book of life. It contains philosophical enquiries into God's moral dealings with man, which enquiries are vindicated against hypocritical, self-styled Orthodoxy, when it "lies for God." It maintains the

right of freedom of thought against established doctrines. The form of the poem is dramatic, but of the simplest kind, presenting a mere assemblage of friends. The mind, "a chartered libertine," revolts at the unqualified statements in the mosaic writers, that worldly prosperity awaits the good, and God allows the appeal, but declares "his un-" suffering kingdom yet will come."

It is probably a picture of the mental struggle of a Jewish captive in Egypt, about the time of Jeremiah. He uses the word *captivity*, as synonymous with *deep distress*. Satan is a half Chaldaic, half Persic personification.

The author, though a Hebrew, has assumed the garb of a free son of the desert, in order to emancipate himself from the narrowing influences of national peculiarities, and to erect with undisturbed freedom, amid the distant scenes of majestic nature, and in the remote age of patriarchal simplicity, a mighty work, which should stand as an everlasting witness of the human mind stretching towards heaven.

It is a marvellous sight, the infantine humanity, in this Syro-Arabian, first grappling, as a Heracles, with those coiled snakes, the unsolved riddles, evil and its origin,—the mysteries of our existence—which baffle to this day, its senile philosophy, in

Leibnitz and in Hegel. Where do we find the sighs of suffering man, "the groans of the creation, travailing together, waiting for redemption from the bondage of corruption," so calmed, as by a mother's gentle voice, so soothed as by an Angel's harp,—as in the book of Job?—TRANSL.

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